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POLYHEDRON® magazine

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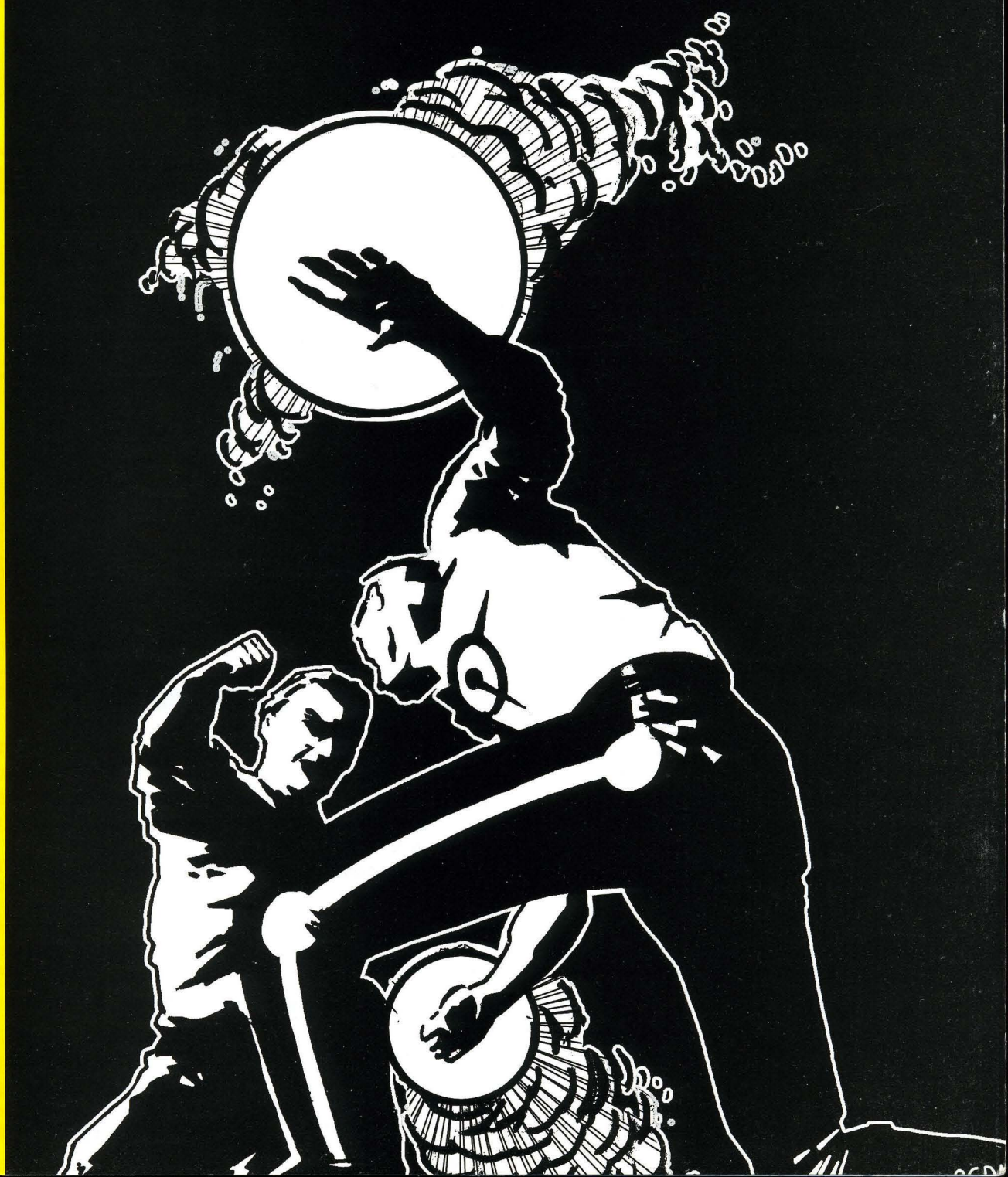
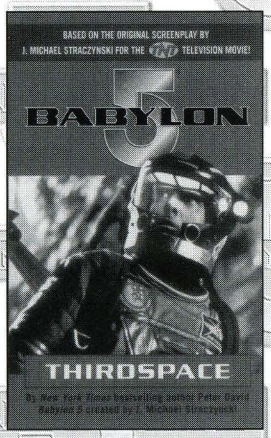


TNT Watch *Babylon 5*: Mondays–Fridays at 7pm (et)
Based on the Warner Bros. television series
created by J. Michael Straczynski

BABYLON 5™

FOR FOUR YEARS, IT'S BEEN ESSENTIAL VIEWING. NOW, IT'S ALSO REQUIRED READING!



On sale in June

BABYLON 5: THIRDSPACE
Peter David

The embattled Babylon 5 station makes a discovery in the depths of hyperspace that could affect the destiny of the civilized universe—a gigantic alien artifact, floating derelict. But attempting to penetrate the mammoth machine's mysteries brings terrifying consequences. Has Babylon 5 uncovered the threshold to a new age...or a gateway to hell? The thrilling novelization of the second full-length *Babylon 5* TV movie—by a *New York Times*–bestselling author, based on the screenplay by J. Michael Straczynski.

A Del Rey Paperback
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POINT OF NO RETURN
Jane Killick

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A comprehensive episode-by-episode guide to the third thrilling season!
BABYLON 5
POINT OF NO RETURN
JANE KILLICK
Babylon 5 created by J. Michael Straczynski

On sale in July

BABYLON 5 TM & © 1998 Warner Bros.

Also available:

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Peter David

BABYLON 5: SIGNS AND PORTENTS
Jane Killick

BABYLON 5: THE COMING OF SHADOWS
Jane Killick

CREATING BABYLON 5
David Bassom

BABYLON 5 SECURITY MANUAL
Jim Mortimore with
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NO SURRENDER
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Jane Killick

BABYLON 5:
DARK GENESIS
The Birth of the Psi Corps
J. Gregory Keyes
Based on an outline
by J. Michael Straczynski

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Notes From

Lead Our Chosen Industries

Part of the Wizards of the Coast mission statement is "to lead our chosen industries." We, as the RPGA® Network, must also lead our "industry"—that of quality roleplaying experiences.

Just as Disney is in the business of providing the best in family fun experiences, we are in the business of providing (and encouraging) the best in quality roleplaying experiences. We have to set the standard for roleplaying quality in tournament settings, retail sites, and at home. We must actively recruit new players into our hobby, train new game masters, and keep them hooked by showing them how they can have a great time in roleplaying games. We must teach people to be better players, better game masters, better people.

To really set the standard, we have to change continually to make our programs and processes better. We have to expand into new areas and offerings, and improve our member communication, both from HQ to members and interpersonally between members. These are big goals, but I know we can do it.

The Baxter Building
TSR, Inc.

Sue Storm
Lisa Stevens

Mr. Fantastic
Robert Wiese

Willie Lumpkin
Technical Support

The Yancy Street Gang
Donna Woodcock
Paul Alan Timm

H.E.R.B.I.E.
Jeff Quick

Bettering our programs and processes means we must find ways to make them more efficient and easy to manage, so that fewer staff hours are required. We must spend our money wisely, for the best "fun profit." So, if you see us doing something strange, please trust that we are trying to spend your money as well as possible. I'll even prove it if you like. I cannot open the whole budget, but I'll explain reasons for almost any particular program decision with numbers (though not over the phone).

Cheaper, Faster, Better

As the Network moves into the future, it becomes more important that we communicate faster and better with all of you. While we'd love to get the magazine back to a monthly schedule, we cannot at this time. It's that money thing. But even if we published monthly, there would always be something we could not fit in. So, we turn more and more to the internet.

With the internet, we can get out fast-breaking information that just cannot wait another month and a half, we can get you information which is constantly in demand, and we can streamline the tournament ordering process. That's why we use the internet so much, and why we strongly recommend that you get onto the internet.

Get an email account from Yahoo or Juno. They're easy and FREE. Yahoo even gives you access to the World Wide Web. For more service, choose a provider that charges money. You can explore the offerings of internet providers by going to your local library and borrowing their internet connection to visit the providers' websites. If you have to dial long distance to a provider, limit your online time to your phone budget. If you don't have a computer, save your pennies and invest. Increasingly, the internet is not just another option. It is becoming an integral part of how we serve our members and provide our programs. If you are not on the internet, you'll be missing out.

Expansion Projects

As soon as we catch our breath from one program, we immediately seem to launch on another. That's expansion, and we are definitely expanding. Though we are still working on streamlining meta-tournament aspects of the LIVING CITY™ campaign, we have begun concept talks on a new LIVING™ World (working title only) which will be so cool that when offered a choice between a LIVING CITY event and playing this new thing, people *will* choose the new thing. It will take shared-world roleplaying campaigns to an entirely new level.

We want to expand into demo teams, learn-to-roleplay programs, and how-to-gamemaster programs within the next

Just as Disney is in the business of providing the best in family fun experiences, we are in the business of providing (and encouraging) the best in quality roleplaying experiences.

COVER STORY: FIGHT! Corey Macourek does a stylish Frank Miller homage involving two beefy types mixing it up old syle.

year. This is a great time to be a part of the Network, and though I am constantly busy, I would not trade my job for any other.

But we cannot reach these new heights without you. We need your input and contributions. For example, you can get involved by:

1. Writing good articles for the magazine and good tournaments for the tournament program;
2. Sending us your suggestions by regular mail or email. Complaining alone doesn't help much. If you don't like something then tell us what you want, not just what you don't like;
3. Taking the "Don Weatherbee Approach." Just do something. You don't need our permission to add something great to the Network. The reason we have the RPGANews and RPGA-Talk email lists, Weekend in Ravens Bluff conventions, meta-tournament organizations in the LIVING CITY campaign, and other things I have no room to mention, is that someone got up and did something without being asked. They wanted it, so they made it happen.
4. Coming to the Summit on October 15-18. This is the chance to really get involved in discussions and proposals on the most crucial aspects of the Network and its future. We already have several important topics to discuss including:

- Redesign of the tournament scoring system
- Concepting and basic design of the new LIVING World campaign
- Definition of the duties and perks of Regional Directors
- Vitalizing the Clubs program
- Convention and game day support issues

More On the Summit—

This is not even all we will do. Send your suggestions NOW for any topics you think we need to address. You don't have to come to the Summit to propose any topic, just send them by mail or email on or before August 31st, so we can plan discussion out (somewhat) and get attendees thinking about what they'd like to be involved in.

We'll also have a few games at the Summit, fun *new* ones that you have not seen before. The evenings will be devoted to gaming and free discussion time. I won't announce what the games are, because I want you to come for the experience of changing the Network, not for the games.

The Summit will be held October 15-18 at the Holiday Inn Select in Renton, WA. Call **425-226-7700** for reservations. When you call to make reservations, tell the hotel you are with Wizards of the Coast to get our rate of $89 per night. Bring friends to share the room costs. Send $35 to HQ and a letter of intent to attend by August 30th. This event is pre-reg only; we must know you are coming.

Tournament Program Changes

It has long been my goal to make the tournament program the best, and most accessible, it could be. Through higher standards on authors, the Judge Certification and Training Program, and other initiatives to come, we are working on making tournament experiences the best they can be. Now the tournament program itself is becoming more accessible. To that end, we have made changes to simplify the program.

Gift Certificate Changes

First, we have decided not to award five dollar gift certificates as prizes any more. We don't have many ways to redeem them, which makes them not very cool. Plus, the process for redeeming them is costly and complex. We feel we can better spend that money. So, starting in September, we will issue a new kind of winner certificate (suitable for framing, if you are into that sort of thing).

The certificates will be usable in two ways. First, you can use them in Network roleplaying tournaments in the same way hero points are used in LIVING JUNGLE™ and LIVING DEATH™ tournaments. Using a certificate (they need a name—any ideas? send them to RPGA HQ) will allow you to add +1 or -1 to any die roll (or 5% to any d100 roll) which you roll to affect your character. You will be able to use as many as three (3) certificates on a single die roll, and you can use them in ANY Network tournament (in any game system). Second, they can be saved and used for occasional special offers, such as limited edition t-shirts, lunch or dinner at interactive events, or anything else we dream up.

Or anything else *you* dream up. If you have a great idea for how winners can use these certificates, send it to HQ. We won't announce special offers too far in advance, so you get to choose whether to use the winning certificates now, or save for the surprise behind door #3.

The reason we have the RPGA email lists, Weekend in Ravens Bluff conventions, meta-tournament organizations in the LIVING CITY campaign, and other things... is that someone got up and did something without being asked.

Further, we will send a certificate to judges for every 3,000 points they earn on their international judge ranking for events. The counting starts in September, as a way of saying "thanks for judging!" People who earn Service Points (in units of 2,000) will receive them too for being friendly and helpful.

Tournament Cost Changes

Second, we decided to lower the prices on tournament rounds. As of September 1st, the fees for tournament rounds drop to $5 per round PROVIDED that you supply a valid email address which can accept file transfers of up to 1.5 MB. This

rate applies regardless of whether you order online, through the US Mail, or fax your order to the office. If you do not have a valid email address to receive the tournament files, then you pay the standard $10 per round.

This fee helps offset the cost of scoring packs and the certificates, plus the data entry time to post the results and fees paid to authors for the tournaments. If we have to copy the tournaments for you, then we'll have you pay for the extra time that takes. Late fees are still double the normal fees which would apply.

Note: conventions occurring on or after September 1st which have already paid will receive a refund to match the new fee structure. The refund will be issued in the name of the convention tournament coordinator, and sent to the contact address for the coordinator.

The incentive program for convention organizers remains in place. If HQ receives the scoring packs from your convention within four weeks of the convention date, you receive a credit of 10 cents (US) per completed packet towards your next convention. If you get an approved data entry program (available soon for download on the website), enter the packets yourself, and send us a datafile with the packets, you receive a credit of 20 cents (again, US) per completed packet towards future conventions. Doing both gets you a total credit of 30 cents per packet. If the datafile we receive is not usable and we have to re-enter the packets, you do not get the credit for entering them. After all, the job didn't get any easier for us. The maximum credit available to any convention is the amount paid for tournament rounds for that convention. So if you paid $60 for rounds, all you can get is $60 in credit.

Deadline Changes

Third, the deadline for tournament requests is set at one month in advance of the convention date, as of September 1st. This applies to online orders, mailed in orders, and faxed orders, provided all tournaments are existing in the Network's tournament library.

However, this one-month deadline is a "received by" date, not a "postmarked by" date. We must receive your order one month in advance. That gives us adequate time to assemble the packets and send them back to you so you can distribute the tournaments to judges. Requests received late will be charged late fee without exception. Requests received within two weeks of the convention date *will be returned unfilled without exception.* Tournament requests which include newly written modules (adventures written for that convention specifically) are still due six months in advance, with new modules. Late fees and denial of new modules are the penalties in this case. Late modules will be denied to the convention unless prior arrangements have been made (prior as in before the due date).

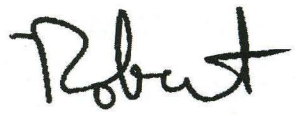
The limit on number of tournaments a convention can order remains at four (4) per day of the convention, two of any LIVING setting per day of the convention. For example, a three-day con could order two LIVING CITY events, two LIVING DEATH events, four AD&D classic events, a Shadowrun classic event, a Star Wars event, and two Virtual Seattle events for a total of twelve events.

These changes work into our plans to support conventions in special ways. We believe that convention experiences are important to the social aspect of gaming. Therefore we want to encourage the running of larger shows. But I am out of space, so stay tuned until next time.

Run Out the Guns!

Because you demanded it, Iron Crown Enterprises has put together a LIVING campaign for their Rolemaster game, or more specifically for their Adventure Kits. The Adventure Kits are streamlined Rolemaster, keeping the best aspects of the game and concentrating on the role-playing and action. *Run Out the Guns!* is a coastal setting involving ships and pirates and all that kind of fun. *Run Out the Guns!* runs out its first guns as a LIVING campaign at the GEN CON® Game Fair this year. More information will become available on how to participate in upcoming issues of the magazine and on the website. If you are at the Game Fair, come by the Arena and try *Run Out the Guns!*

Until next time, go carefully but boldly.



Corrections

After much confusion and apology, we'd like to announce that John Pollock's last name is spelled POLLOCK and none of the odd variants which the editor sadly invented.

Decathlon Deadlines

- **Dragon*Con** — **Sept. 3-6**

Individual Event: Merchant of Fenez (AD&D)
Team Event: Scroll of Heaven (AD&D)

- **Shorecon** — **Sept. 19**

Individual Event: Night in Edo (Call of Cthulhu)

It's not too late to add a fall convention to the list of decathlon sites. Any convention running in October or November can be added, if at least 50 tables of Network events are planned. Contact HQ to have your convention added. A full update will be published next issue.

Table Talk

Origins Award Winners 1997

Some of you got a chance to vote on the Origins award from last issue's ballot. Here are the results as announced at Origins '98. (we only put RPG-related winners here, find the whole list at: <www.wizards.com/News/Origins98/Orgins_Awards.html>.)

Roleplaying Computer Game
Final Fantasy VII
Eidos Software

Amateur Game Magazine
Starry Wisdom
Editors: Dustin Wright, Eric Vogt, Shannon Appel, Drashi Khendup
Chaosium, Inc.

Professional Game Magazine
Knights of the Dinner Table Magazine
Developers: Jolly Blackburn, Brian Jelke, Steve Johansson, David Kenzer
Kenzer & Co.

Game-Related Novel
Planar Powers
Author: J. Robert King
TSR, Inc.

Game-Related Short Work
A Forty Share in Innsmouth
Author: C.J. Henderson
Chaosium

Roleplaying Adventure
Independence Day
Designers: Chris Snyder, Matt Forbeck
Pinnacle Entertainment Group, Inc.

Roleplaying Supplement
Delta Green
Designers: Dennis Detwiller, Adam Scott Glancy, John Tynes
Pagan Publishing

Roleplaying Game
Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game
Designer: John Wick
Alderac Entertainment Group

Graphic Presentation of a Roleplaying Game, Adventure, or Supplement
In Nomine
Graphic Designers: Jeff Koke, Derek Pearcy, Dan Smith
Steve Jackson

New PBM Game
Middle-earth PBM Fourth Age C. 1000
Designers: William B. Feild Jr., Peter G. Stassun
Game Systems, Inc.

Ongoing PBM Game
Star Web
Designer: Rick Loomis
Flying Buffalo, Inc.

1998 Inductees to the Adventure Gaming Hall of Fame:

Nuclear War
Designer: Douglas Malewicki
Flying Buffalo, Inc.

BattleTech Mechs & Vehicles
Developer: Charles Crain
Ral Partha

Berg's Review of Games
Publisher: Richard Berg

Illuminati Play-by-Mail
Designer: Draper Kauffman
Adventure systems, Flying Buffalo, Inc.

Middle-earth Play-by-Mail
Designers: William B. Feild Jr., Peter G. Stassun
Game Systems, Inc.

The Courier
Publisher: Dick Bryant
Courier Publications

Fire & Movement
Baron Publishing, Diverse Talents, Inc., Steve Jackson Games

Strategy & Tactics
SPI, 3W, Decision Games

What's All This Then? ➤

On the facing page is a list of the Best of the Best players for 1997-98. The number in the first column shows placement, the numbers with the slash between them give a person's average score over x number of rounds. Those on this list received an invitation to the First Annual RPGA Best of the Best tournament at GEN CON® Game Fair.

This tournament will decide who wears the crown as "Best of the Best" for the year of 1998-99. We'll feature this talented roleplaying juggernaut in October's issue and heap him or her with well-deserved adulation. Is this enough? NO!

The winner also receives the Grand Prize: an all-expense-paid trip to GEN CON Game Fair '99 to defend his or her title!

Could it possibly get more exciting? Only if we stuffed live badgers down your pants!

Note: If Member #xxxxxx is you, let us know so we can fill you in properly.

NEXT ISSUE BOX

Rogues. Con Men. Professional Ne'er-Do-Wells. Your favorite scalawag AD&D® class, Thieves!

Campaign Players

1	Stephen H Jay IV	28/3
1	Britt L Groom	28/3
3	Member #148360	27/3
4	Shawn Bemis	26/6
4	Peter K Panagakos	26/5
4	Greg Walker	26/3
7	Reinhard D Rittmeyer	25/6
8	David Baker	24/8
8	Keith Symcox	24/6
8	Carl Davis	24/4
8	Patty Adams	24/7
12	Howard J Nenno	23/3
12	Rita E Wyers-Rivera	23/13
12	Tammy Jones	23/4
12	Brian O'Connell	23/7
12	Kile A Madsen	23/3
12	Geoffry Fagan	23/3
12	Jeff W Byrd	23/3
19	Jean Rabe	22/44
19	Steve Hanson	22/3
19	Will Sampson	22/3
19	Craig W Slate	22/5
19	Michael D Painter	22/3
19	Craig M Allen	22/17
19	Robert Hobart	22/13
19	Jaime Young	22/3
19	Chris Whittaker	22/5
19	Cynthia Whitecotton	22/3
19	Suzanne Darrow	22/8
19	Jack D Kyte	22/3
31	Drew Caldwell	21/3
31	Ron Heintz	21/11
31	George Vellella	21/16
31	Joey Masdon	21/41
31	Harry E Brady	21/3
31	Seretha Masdon	21/11
31	Vincent Hendricks	21/5
31	Bill Bullock	21/5
31	Michael Capps	21/10
31	C W Whipple	21/10
31	Fred Maier	21/7
31	Perry Sharpe	21/3
31	William Hill	21/7
31	Brett D Maddex	21/4
31	Greg Sherwood	21/22
31	Kimberley Stone	21/10
31	Saul Resnikoff	21/11
31	Fritz Neufeld	21/6
31	Joe Iceman Pavlico	21/29
31	Michael Watts	21/13
31	Paul W Dorothy	21/24
31	Chuck Wharton	21/24
31	Peitor Murison	21/46
31	Tim J Roberts	21/4
31	Jeff Whitecotton	21/4
31	Johnna Golden	21/3
31	Stan Hooper	21/12
31	Mitch Danforth	21/3
31	Elizabeth Patterson	21/6
31	Grant Bolling	21/25
61	Rocco Pisto	20/9
61	Lindsay Markus	20/12
61	Wayne Straiton	20/4
61	Randy J Starnes	20/10
61	Larry A McAbee	20/6
61	Catherine McClurkin	20/25
61	Sherrie Masdon	20/45
61	J M West	20/33
61	Jeff Fox	20/35
61	James M White	20/50
61	John W Richardson	20/27
61	Ruth Pinsky	20/7
61	Kevin Elmore	20/6
61	Jonathan McCosh	20/3
61	Cherylann Cook-Hoar	20/3
61	Coleman C Tussey	20/3
61	Bill Reynolds II	20/21
61	Lars Granrud	20/28
61	Timothy Hernandez	20/10
61	Michele Maakestad	20/9
61	Laura M Harvey	20/11
61	Gail L Reese	20/27
61	Martin Urick	20/4
61	Jason Ehrlich	20/8
61	Edward D Leonard	20/3
61	Victor Brian Greenwalt	20/3
61	Paul Bender	20/3
61	Robin Vitti	20/13
61	Jeremy Willard	20/9
61	Darin L Coole	20/14
61	Patricia A Jackson	20/32
61	James Traino	20/19
61	Matt Kelley	20/5
61	Olivia Cooper	20/4
61	Alvin D McKinnon II	20/3
61	Jeremy Coupland	20/7
61	Randy Terpstra	20/3
98	Steven C Elliott	19/14
98	Michael Schneider	19/5
98	Dale King	19/20

Classic Players

1	Richard Iorio II	25/3
2	Carl Davis	24/4
2	Jeff Whitecotton	24/4
2	Rick McLeod	24/4
5	Lindsay Markus	23/3
5	Wayne S Melnick	23/6
5	Jeff Richards	23/3
5	Dennis Williamson	23/3
5	Elizabeth Licholai	23/3
5	Parvez Yusifji	23/3
5	James Toth	23/3
5	Dusty Rhodes	23/3
13	George F Kraus	22/3
13	Donald Weatherbee	22/4
13	Larry A McAbee	22/3
13	Sherrie Masdon	22/3
13	Richard Radnay	22/4
13	Klim Altman	22/10
13	Patty Adams	22/7
13	Jeff Mrochek	22/4
13	Kenneth L Schroeder	22/4
22	Michael Capps	21/3
22	Kevin W Kulp	21/7
22	Robert E Burns	21/6
22	John W Richardson	21/3
22	Richard Dold	21/4
22	Laura M Harvey	21/4
22	Jeff White	21/5
22	Keith Tatum	21/3
22	Andrew Carso	21/3
22	Goon Pattanomotana	21/3
22	Erick Ingram	21/3
33	Richard Bingle	20/12
33	Randall W Lemon	20/19
33	Donald J Bingle	20/23
33	Nicky Rea	20/5
33	Brett Bakke	20/10
33	Jae Walker	20/3
33	James E Lockhart	20/5
33	Jeff Fox	20/8
33	Stephen K Glasgow	20/3
33	Bob Arco	20/3
33	Michael Huggins	20/3
33	Stephanie Zuiderweg	20/6
33	Brandon Kavanagh	20/5
33	George Fulda	20/4
33	Saul Resnikoff	20/8
33	Robin Vitti	20/8
33	Peitor Murison	20/4
33	Julie Ratliff	20/6
33	Bill Legate	20/8
33	Todd A Carr	20/3
33	Carlton Coleman	20/4
33	William (Mike) M Fred	20/3
55	Richard J Rydberg	19/6
55	John Maurer	19/4
55	George Vellella	19/8
55	Agnes Thompson	19/3
55	Wes Nicholson	19/6
55	Michael Born	19/11
55	James M White	19/8
55	Gary H Carroll	19/3
55	Rita E Wyers-Rivera	19/5
55	Stephen H Jay IV	19/4
55	Su White	19/3
55	Jon McIntyre	19/3
55	Hans Nelson	19/5
55	Charles E Carroll	19/5
55	Sholom J West	19/6
55	Adam H Morse	19/4
55	Brigitte Holmdahl	19/3
55	Andrew Vanhooreweghe	19/5
55	Jeffrey Scott Meyers	19/3
55	Jeff Z Quick	19/4
55	Rob Howell	19/5
55	Rick Hawkins	19/3
55	Michael McDougall	19/3
55	Brian Ferrenz	19/3
55	Ron Beres	19/6
55	Steve Schirm	19/6
55	Theresa Hurley-Felton	19/5
55	Jon Goldstein	19/3
55	Richard J Bowers-Dean	19/3
55	Ian Timothy James	19/4
55	Member #316705	19/3
86	John Hinkle	18/9
86	Jayson Rock	18/10
86	Gary Ganas	18/3
86	Craig Lewis	18/5
86	Tim White	18/7
86	Valerie Fricault	18/3
86	Julie Rydberg	18/5
86	Bill Sheffield	18/6
86	Gregory Dreher	18/12
86	Erik Mona	18/4
86	Fred Maier	18/6
86	Joseph E Noble II	18/4
86	Eric Olson	18/4
86	Andrew Hauptman	18/7
86	Kim Winz	18/3

Table Talk

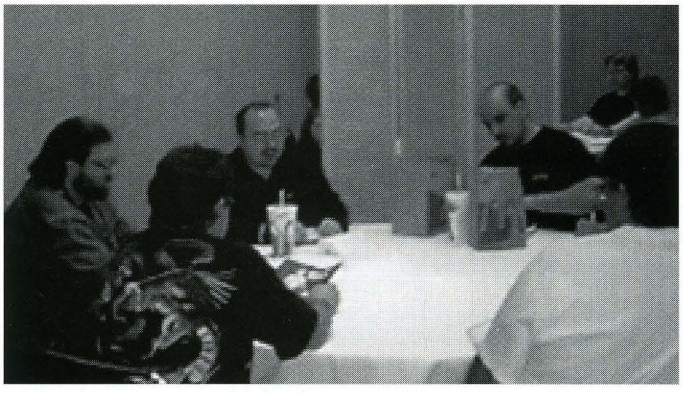
convention convention convention report

Manafest '98

RPGs are putting the moves on Manafest in the Bay Area of California. Until recently, Manafest has been a TCG convention, but no longer.

This is due in large part to butt-kicking RPGA efforts. David W. Baker took these photos (right) with a digital camera to show off the action. The resolution may be a little grainy, but the gameplay baby, it's CRYSTAL CLEAR!

Jason Singleton, Kary Bright, and Cisco Lopez-Fresquet inspect some hard-earned treasure.



RPGA members eat Scottish with Wizards President, Peter Adkison. (pictured clockwise around the table from left) Chris McGuigan, Peter Adkison, Cisco Lopez-Fresquet, Pete Xxxxx, and Frank Alonso.

Chris McGuigan (2nd from right) GMs fearlessly, while Mac Chambers (far right) smiles like a half-orc for the camera.

Guildmaster's Grimoire

by Alan Grimes, RPGKC Guildmaster
(from *Guildletters*, June 1998)

Another convention [ShaunCon XV] has come and gone. As always, it is you, the gamers, who make the convention a success. My sincerest thanks as well to the judges, who presented a great assortment of games! The convention had 164 attendees. We raised $325 for the Harvesters during our benefit auction, which provides 2,175 meals.... GEN CON® Game Fair is fast approaching. I hope many of you are also attending as it is a fantastic chance to see what is up and coming in the game world.

Ben Con

"Play games, Have Fun, Do Good"
by Rich Kohl

This past weekend I just attended the best gaming convention in the nation. I'm talking about Ben Con in Denver Colorado. Over the three days of the convention we had lots of fun, and helped raise money for charity. The final total for the weekend was $10,000.

That's right $10,000.

This con is put on by the Rocky Mountain Benefit Gamers Association. Most if not all, of the Board Members of this fine organization belong to the RPGA. In fact, Ken Ritchart is the president of the RMBGA and also the Rocky Mountain Regional rep of the RPGA. Where else could these people have met, found out they loved gaming and also liked to help with local charities?

So, if you're not doing anything next Memorial Day Weekend, join us at Ben Con next year. If you need more information about this and other Colorado Cons, check out their Web page <www.bengames.org>. Hope to see many of you there.

your initiative

Lots of ideas this month. If anyone agrees or disagrees with anything, write.

Dear Jeff Quick,

Please consider an all-LIVING CITY™ issue for POLYHEDRON® Magazine.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely yours,
James P. Buchanan
Duluth, MN

Dear RPGA Network,

The current scoring system for tournament roleplaying games, such as that for the AD&D® Open, is in desperate need of revising. In the very early days of roleplaying, as well as the early days of the AD&D Open, the system did work. This was due to the fact that roleplaying was much more simple than it is today.

The biggest complaint about the scoring system is that no true scoring exists for actually roleplaying pregenerated characters as presented. The complaint has an unhealthy truth about it when it comes to the AD&D Open. The most highly-rewarded tournament for the AD&D roleplaying game gives no true merit to roleplaying.

The solution clearly must be to find a new scoring system that is fair to the original tournament style as well as those who are exceptional roleplayers.

The technical and mechanical aspects of the tournament should remain. As they say, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Leave in all of the scoring system that already exists for technical merit. Then with the total number of possible points, take an equal amount of points and implement roleplaying points.

The points given for roleplaying should be based on how players interacted with one another, how players roleplayed the characters given on their handouts, how certain players roleplayed during key moments of the scenario, and problems solved through players roleplaying their characters.

Then, just as always, add the points up. Those who exceed in both areas—those with the highest total number of points—advance and win tournaments.

If the higher-ups in charge of running the AD&D Open disagree, then the RPGA Network should withdraw their involvement with the AD&D Open until such changes take place.

If the Network is not given a choice in the matter and must supply judges for the Open, then we, the judges, should make a personal stand and refuse to judge the Open until these changes take place.

The AD&D Open cannot take place if there are no judges to run the event. The choice is ours. Let us finally take a stand on this issue for the betterment of roleplaying tournaments as a whole.

Daniel Thatcher
Mount Pleasant, MI

Greetings Jeff and HQ staffers,

I'm a New Zealander who for the past three years has been the only network member in Brunei in Southeast Asia. Now that I'm back home, I'd like to forward letters that got shelved over the last year while POLYHEDRON Magazine was in limbo, so to speak. I'm pleased that the magazine still offers a forum for this.

Some feedback on the content of Polys past: I love the "pocket scenarios" for AD&D that periodically appear, with or without PCs. These are handy one or two-night fillers for a DM who seldom has time to write his own anymore (sympathy welcome).

Secondly, I love off-the-wall articles like the reprint of "Zee Chef" which appeared in Issue #123. Spells such as *dancing bites*, *explosive prunes*, and *spiritual tenderizer* were priceless—perfect to inspire an encounter with a zany NPC.

Thirdly, articles that introduce new spells and re-think philosophies on playing particular classes give me great value. Jim Laubacker's "Role-playing First Aid" (#119) introduced the priest spells *cure moderate wounds* and *recitation* (both instantly adopted by my own cleric) and gave an overdue re-think on the primary role of priests as healers, not hack-and-slashers. Ed Greenwood's addition to his Elminster column in Issue #120, *Archeveult's spell dagger* was also intriguing—it's one of those spells like *finger of death* which probably won't work against a high-level opponent, but if it does, could well save PC lives in a showdown.

Fourthly, tips for good DMing that appear in a brief, reader-friendly format such as Skip Williams' offerings not only provide food for thought, but can be warmly encouraging when you discover that you're already using some of the approaches that a high priest of RPG employs himself.

Lastly, is POLYHEDRON able to reprint articles from ancient issues of DRAGON® Magazine? If this is allowable, may I suggest the following four:

1) Non-violent Magic Items [Lewis Pulsipher and Roland Gettliffe, May 1983]—this offers 100 great ideas to add to otherwise mundane rooms as rewards for observant players;

2) When It Gets Hit, It Gets Hurt—a system for equipment damage [Arthur Collins, May 1983]

3) Nasty Additions to a DM's Arsenal [Richard Fichera, Sept 1983]—the *helm of enemy non-detection* and the *arrows of conscientious objection* have provided some terrific humour through the years;

4) CURSES! Twenty good ideas for bad tidings [Ed Greenwood, Sept 1983]

Yours in RPG,
Matt Brebner
Tauranga, New Zealand

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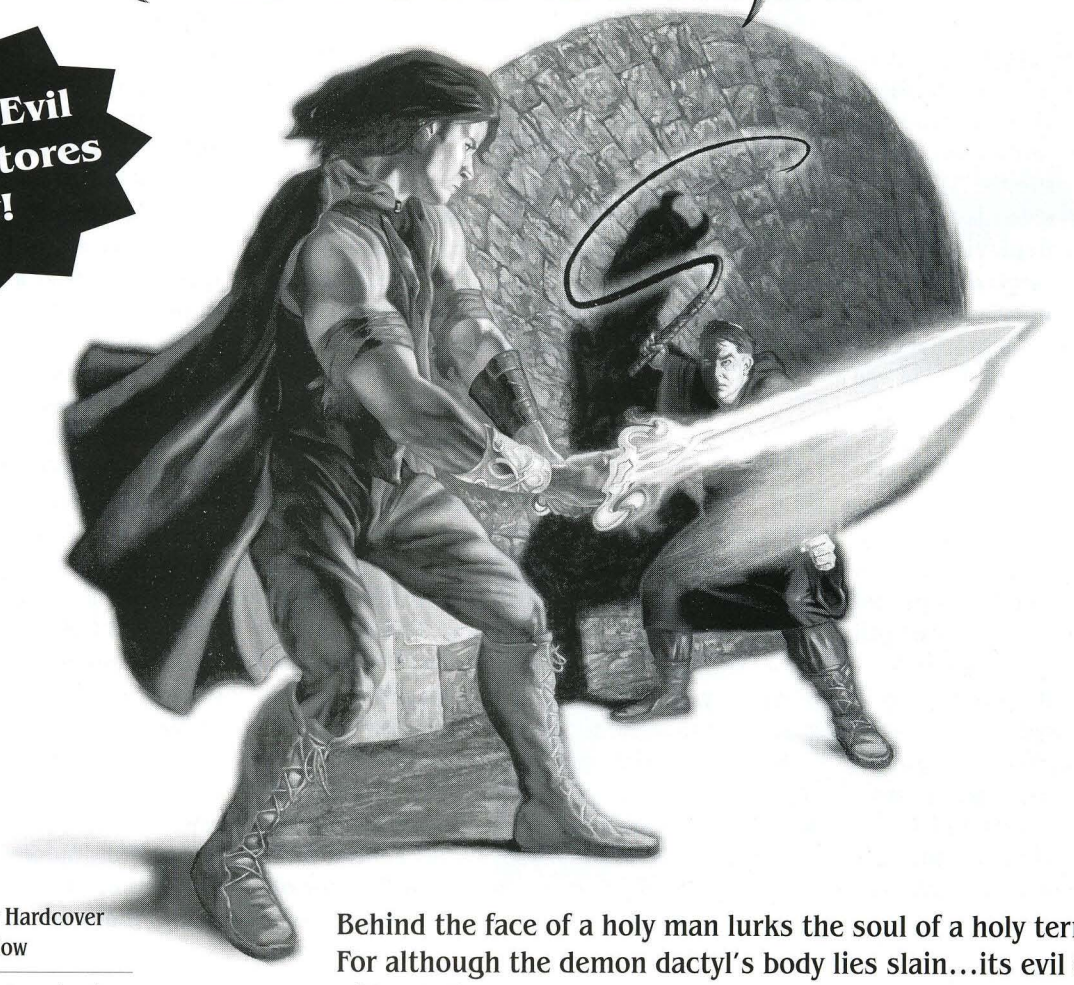

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Behind the face of a holy man lurks the soul of a holy terror! For although the demon dactyl's body lies slain...its evil essence will not die.

Thus, for the land of Corona, the time of dread has not yet ended. And for warrior Elbryan Wynden, the greatest battle has just begun.

Pillars of the Realm

by Brian Miller

The Pillars of the Realm is one of the religious orders of knighthood in Ravens Bluff. It is officially recognized and administered by the Knights' Council. These "Pillars of Virtue and Civic Responsibility" have pledged to aggressively support the Clerical Circle in accomplishing its duties and to serve as the city's conscience. The order was established to act as a balance and source of protection against the rise of evil clerical powers in the city. Its members believe they are a living shield for the people of Ravens Bluff and pray to their respective gods to become true symbols of their faiths.

While these knights swear loyalty to the city, their first duty is to the city's Clerical Circle. Extremely loyal and disciplined, this elite group of knights strives to protect the balance of religious toleration that allows the city's different religious believers to live together in peace. The knights know that evil forces are already at work trying to break the circle. They will do whatever has to be done to see that it remains whole.

To become a Pillar Knight, a character must either squire directly to the Order or enter from another Order as a knight-squire. The character must be at least a 4th level Cleric or Druid; a 5th level Crusader, Monk, or Paladin; a 6th level Ranger; or 7th level in any other class.

Responsibilities

- Pillar Knights are sometimes required to go undercover, seeking evidence of evil religions that are trying to recruit followers and finding hidden evil sanctuaries within the city.
- Pillar Knights defend those temples whose practices may not sit well with the majority of the population, but are not evil.
- Pillar Knights are sometimes required to track down priestly criminals and return them to trial by the Ecclesiastical Court.
- Pillar Knights are the ones that step in to a conflict between temples of the civic religion before they come to blows. This is the last measure of enforcement of will by the Clerical Circle in maintaining relations. More common is the "cordial" visit by a knight to a particular temple whose priests are encouraging, or tolerating, slander, abuse, etc.
- Pillar Knights are seen most among common people, lending a helpful hand, giving food to the poor and trying to guide those who may have lost their direction in life—alcoholics, petty thieves and the like—back into the community of good and productive citizens.
- Pillar Knights must tithe 10 percent of all wealth gained to the Clerical Circle to help it fund civic projects like feeding the city's hungry, training people to get jobs, and building homes for the homeless.

Benefits

- When knighted, Pillars receive the Ancient Religion Proficiency, this acts like Ancient History however it refers only to ancient religions in Faerun, if the knight has both Religion and Ancient History then the knight receives a +1 bonus to all three proficiencies. Ancient Religion is based off Wisdom with a -2 penalty, one additional slot will increase the proficiency by one point.
- If killed on a mission, Pillar Knights whose bodies are recovered can have a *raise dead* or *resurrection* spell cast on them at a 20% discount.
- The knight may write recommendations for a squire's admission into the knightly orders.
- The knight qualifies for another knighthood with 3 fewer chivalry points than those who squire directly to the order.
- The knight receives three Fame points upon being accepted to the order, two Fame points for every knightly honor awarded, and one Fame point for every Chivalry Point awarded. These may be divided among any appropriate categories.

Special Honors

Like all knighthoods, the Pillars have several special honors they award to their outstanding members.

The Jade Ring

Given to a knight who, while on a mission, survived extreme conditions of weather and other circumstances, and successfully completed the task that brought them there.

The Azure Girdle

A cloth belt/girdle marked with the order's symbol is given to a knight who sees a potentially dangerous clash of legal religions that could escalate, and defuses the problem before it becomes a matter of serious concern. In cases where the trouble was actually caused by a member of an evil religious cult the knight should have apprehend the guilty priest.

The Silver Pendant

This silver pendant set with a ruby half-moon is given to a knight who assisted in the defense of a temple devoted to one of the civic religions inside the city of Ravens Bluff.

The Crimson Gauntlet

This piece of finely made armor, or a symbolic glove, is given to a knight who succeeds in an undercover mission that rooted out the leaders of a banned religion trying to establish itself in Ravens Bluff.

The Broken Pillar

The rarest of all Pillar awards. This is reserved for knights who went undercover, died on a mission, and whose bodies could not be recovered. It is basically a headstone shaped like a broken pillar. Knights honor their fallen dead through various ceremonies of remembrance during the year.

Elminster's Everwinking Eye

The Border Kingdoms

by Ed Greenwood

The Land of Two Princes

Our look at the Land of Two Princes concludes herein with notes on features of its landscape, and the Hunt that rages endlessly through it. The hamlets

of the realm are pastoral farming backwaters with pumps, inns, farmers' markets, and clustered cottages. Inns and taverns are neutral ground in the Hunt; swordplay, arson, and horse-thieving are all banned within their walls and yards.

All the inns are of the "rustic roadhouse" type, with low-beamed ceilings and everpresent smoke. Only Appletree and Runcerin have separate taverns: the Mercenary Made Good in Appletree (Fair/Moderate), and the Three Dancing Knights in Runcerin (Good/Moderate) both provide decent food for traveleres at fair prices.

From west to east, the inns of the realm (excluding Gallard) are:

At the foot of Corthgrolt: The Roaring Lion (Excellent/Expensive)

Runcerin: The Black Arrow (Good/Cheap)

Umble: Old Yorth's Apples (Good/Cheap; incorporates a cider press)

Dlackbridge: Sammer's Tankard (Poor/Moderate; infamous for its weak, watery beer)

Ornar's Belt: The Helm and Skull (Good/Moderate; known for its decor of helms and skulls of fallen warriors)

Appletree: Two Fallen Princes (Excellent/Expensive; guarded by controlled helmed horrors, to carry guests' luggage)

Starshroud: The Ghost And Flagon (Good/Cheap; haunted by the gliding apparition of a barmaid, who serves phantom ale to nonexistent customers in the taproom at least once a night)

Bucklegrim: Grimgar's House (Fair/Cheap; Grimgar also buys, sells, and repairs used armor and weaponry)

At the foot of Revelrar: Malduth's Stag (Excellent/Expensive; its beautiful escort staff have even lured members of the rival House of the Lion here for daring visits in disguise)

The Starshroud

Of all the hamlets in the Land of Two Princes, only Starshroud is of particular interest. It's named for a curious magic placed in a nearby dell some eighty years ago, by a passing sorceress who may—or may not—have been Mystra herself.

The spell created a gray, smoky mist which seems permanent. It withstands all magics cast against it, seeming to absorb them without allowing them to take effect. It causes the dying, near-dead, and recently dead taken within to float in the positions where they are left. Such beings do not decay, bleed, or waste away. They remain indefinitely, with diseases, curses, *geas* spells, and even contingency magics halted, until physically towed out, whereupon harmful processes resume.

Predators don't enter the mists, although combatants have been known to go in and rob or hide bodies. Some even covertly remove bodies to bring about certain death, but this is rare. The "starshroud" (so named because those within it by night can't see the stars overhead) is usually used to keep valued combatants from death until healing or resurrection magics can be obtained. Able-bodied or only lightly wounded persons who enter the starshroud won't fall asleep.

Borderers don't spread word of the dell, fearing a mass invasion of dying and diseased folk. In many cases, they don't believe one more crazed tale from the Land of Two Princes anyway. Anyone can be left in it, not just combatants in the Hunt. Even members of the two rival families can be left, though if one can be kept alive by agents of the rival House, they'll certainly be stolen. It's another of the unwritten rules of the Hunt that no one can dwell or linger in the enspelled dell. There are rumors that the magic

gnaws at the minds of all who try, leaving them drooling, raving, stumbling idiots ("right fit to marry into one of the Houses," as an old farmers' joke goes).

Strongholds of the Realm

The traveler in the Land of Two Princes will see more than woodlots, rolling fields, orchards, and cottages. On every height of land is a ruined folly or "stronghold," standing like broken teeth against the sky. Most are littered with the bones of the fallen in the Hunt. Some are haunted by undead, or used by brigands or monsters as lairs. Local children consider it daring to explore or play at fighting in them. Nary a year passes without someone finding a few lost coins, or even an enchanted weapon, as the ground collapses into a hidden cellar, or erosion uncovers another grave.

Every stronghold has several names, and Volo gathered over a hundred (without recording their precise locations), such as: Oscalot, The Sunset Wall, Malkin's Turret, Arambar's Hold, Untkeep, Baland's Gard, and Stornpost.

Elminster contributed a few more. The one that looks like a large castle when viewed from the south (Gallard), but is revealed as an empty shell from other directions, is Ghoound Castle, often used as an overnight encampment by caravans. The turret on a promontory on the east bank of Swordpoint Pond, just north of Dlackbridge, is Blackstone Hall, and the ring of tumbled stones hard by Appletree is all that's left of Watchfire Keep. Rumors persist of treasure beneath Blackstone Hall, and Elminster says underground storage cellars, linked by deep passages, are certainly present.

Another landmark is Weeping Maiden Well, a clearwater well thought to be haunted, that lies off the roads in wooded country due north of Gallard. Many deserters from the Hunt and fugitives from the justice head there. Its abandoned orchards and fields yield some food, and both the hunting and available cover is good if bands of warriors come looking for lawless men.

The Hunt

The Land of Two Princes is shaped and defined by the Hunt, the generations-old struggle for rule over the land. Thrice it's almost been won, but never quite ended. The tendency of members of both ruling families to assume disguises and flee the realm to escape capture, just when the terms of victory have almost been met by the rival House has definitely prolonged the struggle.

The Hunt has consumed the lives of thousands of adventurers and ambitious warriors. Its rules state that it can be suspended only for a defense of the realm against an invasion, with rival forces joining to fight. Those who drafted the agreement expected an invasion from the Shaar, though the clause applies to attacks from adjoining realms as well. In times of Borderer ambition, these could be frequent. Such cooperation has occurred thrice; no such invasion is anticipated in the near future.

Surprisingly, the rules of the Hunt are infrequently broken. Transgressors pay with their lives, swiftly. A fulfillment of the victory conditions, however, might not bring as orderly an end to the now-traditional conflict.

Forces are at work to prevent the Hunt from ever ending. Many priests of Tempus are posted here by their superiors, for training. They do brisk business healing, raising, and burying combatants, earning much money. Someone who refuses to pay a priest's fee will find that no clergy of the Wargod, anywhere in the land, will aid him until it is paid doubly. Two-thirds of all clerical fees are yielded up to senior priests of Tempus, who travel Faerûn as tithe collectors.

The Tempuran church uses monies for the upkeep of its holy sites and clergy, and spends the rest in support of warfare, sponsoring swordsmiths, armorers, and the like. The rival Houses of Amcorth and Meldrist are prime examples of the latter. The coins they gain allow them to live in high style and recruit fresh warriors all over the Realms. A steady stream of battle-hungry warriors comes out of the Vilhon, seeking the Hunt they've heard of, but both families are always seeking skilled adventurers or veteran warriors, to give them an edge in battle.

Those who love danger and warfare often travel to the Land of Princes for a taste of it. Certain noble ladies of Waterdeep like to picnic in strongholds while warriors battle all around. One such lady was recently heard to proclaim, "I don't feel it's truly been a good summer unless I've been to that land of the Hunt, and had some warrior's hot blood spattered all over me!"

"Oh, aye; that realm where they fight all the time, to rule a land that's never known peace. Delightful. Remind me to send the next malcontents brought to me for judgement there, speedily."

—Dolorn Imbracey
Lord of Low Justice, Priapurl
to his colleague Cormor Hurthlas
Year of the Harp

IT'S BACK
and no one's happier about it than I am.
Of course, I mean the new MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game driven by the SAGA® game system.

WITH GREAT POWER

Getting started with the new MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game

by Dale Donovan

I've read Marvel comics for probably 20 years (yes, that's longer than some of you have lived; don't remind me), and the super-hero genre is still my favorite to play. I played the original Marvel RPG almost from the day it was published. I bought the Advanced Set when it came out, and I still love that system dearly.

That game was state-of-the-art game design of the 1980s. But the new SAGA MARVEL game is state-of-the-art game design of the 1990s. My favorite aspect of the new game is that I get to have a say in task resolution. I don't have to rely on a random number from dice; I decide whether to play the 9 or the 3 from my hand of cards.

But before I rave too much about the game, I'll get to the point of this article: you've bought the new MARVEL RPG (you have, right?), you've read through the rules, and are ready to play. Now what the heck do you do?

Getting Started

I'm assuming you've got a group of gamers or comics fans ready and waiting to play the game. Either from experience or simply because you were the first one to buy the game, you get to be the Narrator (the SAGA term for GM).

The first thing to do is to find out what kind of hero each player wants to play. Players can create a wide variety of hero types. While this is certainly desirable in any RPG, it can cause headaches for you as the Narrator.

It's best to get everyone together to create their heroes at one time. That way, you can establish optional rules (I give players the normal 10 cards plus two more 5s), and address questions only once. Next, ask about the kinds of heroes the players envision creating. I don't mean just what powers they want (though that's important), but find what type of person they want to be: angst-ridden mutant, noble patriot, bored millionaire, hi-tech wizard, martial artist, benevolent alien, mystic master, speedster, etc. Heroes with similarities (two mutants, for example) might have a link.

Using the example above, these mutants might be related, attend the same school for "gifted students," or be hired by the same corporation that wants to take advantages of their "skills." Help the players find a focus for the group, a reason why these particular heroes might come together if given the chance.

Forging Ties

As the players create their heroes, again offer suggestions to help bring the PCs together—trust me, you're saving yourself work. Let the players create the heroes they want to play, but remind them that they will eventually be a team. Six Wolverine-wannabe loners won't last long as a team, and that could doom your campaign before it even starts (for more on making your super team work together, see Steve Kenson's article on page 28). If you do get stuck with a team like this, despite your protests, you have a

challenge before you. Rather than just giving up, let the players and their characters go for a while. If the players themselves don't cause the group to self-destruct, try the following.

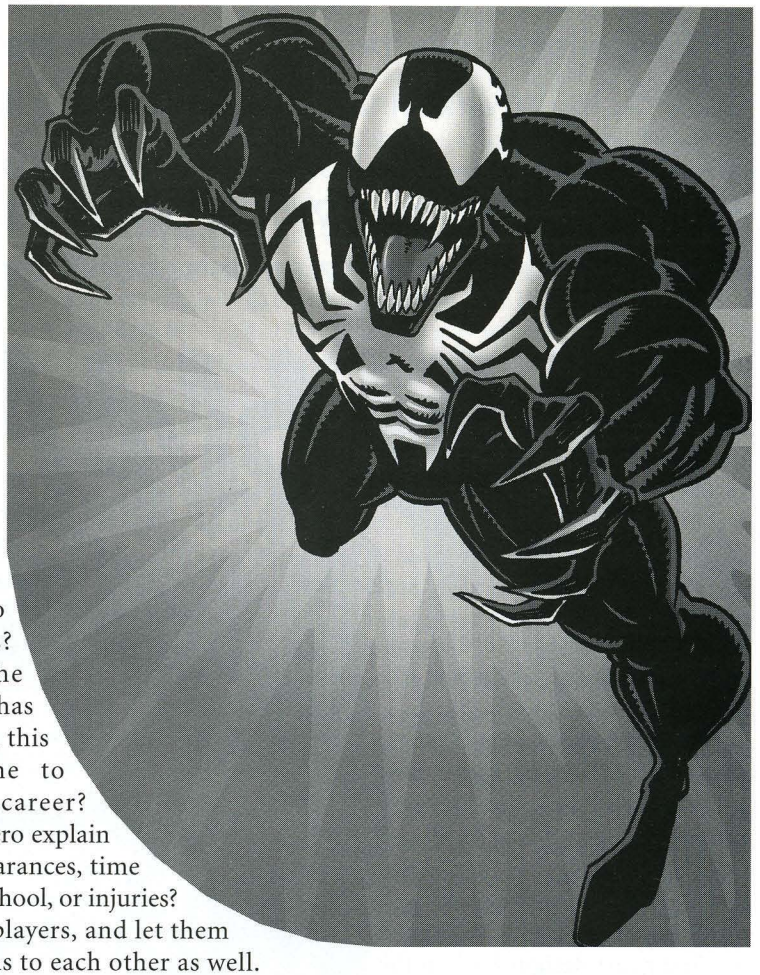
Sometimes, telling people something just doesn't work. You have to show them. Create a scenario that involves a team of super villains that works well together. They coordinate attacks, communicate with each other, stay together, and use their skills and powers (in a word, tactics). If you throw this group of bad guys at your heroes, the heroes will get their clocks cleaned. Good, that's the point. Show players how advantageous it is to work together, to plan, to act like a team by showing them what a team can do (even if it's against the heroes).

Avoid killing heroes though. The players will focus on the death then, and not on the point you were trying to make. After this, the players are likely to at least try to come around and work together. In addition, now you've got a great team of potential arch-foes; the heroes will definitely remember the villains who handed them their heads early in their careers.

Assembling the Team

Now that the players have their heroes created, it's time for you to step in again. Try to get the players to think of their characters as people, not just as collections of numbers and skin-tight suits. What makes MARVEL characters fun to read about and follow is that each one is a person under the funny suit. Captain America is a soldier serving the ideals of his country; Spider-Man is true to the responsibility of his power; the X-Men fight to make the world better. Find out why these heroes are heroes.

I don't mean for you to ask players how their heroes got their powers (again though, powers are important, and could serve to link some heroes together). Ask them why a person with these strange powers has decided to put on a funny set of clothes and risk life and limb for what most people would consider dubious benefits. Few heroes have normal social or romantic lives, some have trouble holding down jobs, and having a secret identity at all requires a hero to lie on a regular basis. Becoming a hero won't be an easy decision in most cases.



Once you've got the players thinking along these lines, ask a few more questions. Use the same basic questions that all journalists ask: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Who is the hero out of costume? What does the hero do to earn a living? When does the hero find time to do real-life things? Where does the hero live? Why has the hero chosen this particular time to begin a heroic career? How does the hero explain curious disappearances, time out of work or school, or injuries? Work with the players, and let them offer suggestions to each other as well. Often, a generous player will offer his or her hero as a group focal point (like Professor Xavier for the X-Men).

Getting Rolling

Okay, you've got the heroes and at least some idea of how and why they might get together. What's next? Well, the MARVEL RPG includes a great introductory adventure, *Shakedown*. This scenario is set in New York City (naturally), which can be a problem for Narrators who don't want their campaigns set there.

It's easy enough to change it to the city you'll be using as your campaign base (Chicago, Seattle, Des Moines, etc.). Otherwise you need to create reasons for the heroes to be there. The possibilities are as endless as the heroes involved, but we can proceed using the types of heroes that are common in the Marvel Universe.

High-tech heroes could have a business meeting with Tony Stark or Reed Richards or could be attending a trade show. Mutants can spend a day in the city before visiting Xavier School for Gifted Youngsters. Mystic heroes have come to meet with Dr. Strange. Almost any hero could be involved with the Avengers or Heroes for Hire.

Personal reasons could bring the heroes to New York (or whatever you're calling the city, as long as it has a subway system). They could be visiting family or friends. Many people travel to the City That Never Sleeps to see Broadway shows, visit museums, and eat at elegant restaurants. New York is also home to the UN, which the PCs can become involved with in a number of ways. Once you've got the heroes there, you're ready to unleash the adventure on them.

In Conclusion

Getting any game campaign up and rolling is often the most difficult aspect of gaming. But if you and your players do the early work well, both the heroes and the campaign will begin to take on lives of their own. That will make the game more fun for everyone, and be much less work for you, the Narrator! Good luck and good gaming!

❑

Mike Selinker has been an RPGA fixture for so long, there's a Time/Life the '80s, he designed dozens of tournaments and marshaled at GEN CON® as notorious LIVING CITY™ scam artist, Discount Merlin. His latest design release for TSR, the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game. We caught Pool with his Spider-Man Telescopic Spincast Combination fishing rod, and

MARVEL TALES

Starring Mike Selinker

How'd I get sucked into this project? Well, it went something like this:

I'm minding my own business here at WotC, designing expansions for the BATTLETECH trading card game, when Peter Adkison up and buys an RPG company. Not just any RPG company, mind you, but TSR, the one who published my first game designs back in the Triassic Era.

"Neat," I say, and go back to cranking out BattleMechs.

But then the powers-that-be say, "Mike, we want you to stop working on BATTLETECH."

And I say, "What could be more fun than working on 30-foot-tall giant robot tanks?"

And they say, "How 'bout Spider-Man?"

And I say, "Okay." 'Cause that's what you do when they hand you Spider-Man.

You don't get many opportunities to create something that you know people want even before you start work on it. The classic MARVEL SUPER-HEROES Role-Playing Game ran out its life cycle in 1992 while the game was still hot. Untold thousands of units of that game moved off the shelves, more than most mainstream books. And then it vanished.

Marvel Saga

Five years later, TSR was giving me the chance to put it back on the shelves in a whole new way. Fresh from their debut in the accoladed DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE® game, the SAGA® game rules were awaiting their next appearance. Rather than repeat its success with romantic fantasy, SAGA was wedded to Marvel Comics, an unorthodox pairing. On my first day as an actual employee of TSR, they asked me if I believed the SAGA system could make the transition from literary fantasy to rock-em-sock-em comic book action.

"Oh yeah," I said. "Couldn't be a better match."

Before you ask what I was inhaling, understand my mindset. I don't much like superhero games. Most of them, in my totally unsolicited opinion, spend too much effort on min-maxing the ultimate superhero and not enough effort on enjoyable play. Other than classic *Marvel*, which I found elegant, *Champions* is probably the best of the bunch. But even in that great game, a combat that takes eight panels of a comic can take an hour or two to play. If you like that, go nuts. Me, I want something that plays like a comic book.

Sure, you say. Nice and pithy, Mike. Plays like a comic book. What the heck does it mean?

Well, at this point—remember that this is day one of the job at the greatest publisher of RPGs ever—I haven't a blessed clue. But for some reason, my new boss (Harold Johnson, the guy who brought me in as an RPGA author in 1985) thinks I know what I'm talking about.

Plays like a comic book, I keep muttering. That means it's got to be fast. It can't be obsessed with details. It must put the action in front of the rules. It's got to be... exhausting.

book series on repairing him. In Game Fair between appearances is the 1998 major summer him angling in the WotC Mana forced him to tell us about it.

Yeah, that's it. I make up my mind to design the most exhausting RPG ever. Strategic decisions at light speed. Active rule-bending in the middle of the action. Constant reflex actions on the part of the game master. Cards flying every which way.

Oh, did I mention the cards? For those of you seeking the next great dice-based RPG, well, sorry, no dice. This game, like DRAGONLANCE before it, would have cards as its focus. Instead of rolling for success, players creatively play cards. And the game master would use the cards to empower the villains and thwart the good intentions of the heroes.

First up though, the lead designer has to get a lot better at his job. Or get a lot of help.

Marvel Team-Up

I unbecomingly beg for a co-designer. You don't ever want to see anything that pathetic. Trust me.

The embarrassing secret is that I don't know Marvel comics all that well. It's not a capital offense, I just missed out on a decade of Marvel comics, and had a pretty patchy knowledge of stuff before that.

I knew the early material from the '60s, and bought the X-Men and a few others in the early '80s. But if you were TSR looking for a designer who could tell you what happened in every issue of *Giant-Size Man-Thing*, you wouldn't have found one in my house. (Well, maybe under the floorboards, but that's between me and my parole officer.)

And even though I wrote tournaments for classic MARVEL game in the late '80s, my experiences with that game gave me a healthy fear of pretending I knew more than I did. I still get chills about the last time I ran a Marvel RPGA tourney, at a Spring Fantasy convention ten years ago.

On the right side of the table were three longtime friends. On the left were three 14-year-old Marvel fanatics. I was running a scenario featuring a new team called Excalibur, the X-Men of the UK. Of course, I knew Nightcrawler and Shadowcat. But Phoenix wasn't the woman I thought she was, and somebody named Captain Britain was leading. But hey, I was in charge. I couldn't very well admit I didn't know what was going on.

Silly me. What I didn't count on was that my buddy Don Bingle didn't have any idea who Captain Britain was either. So naturally, at some point he wanted to use the Captain's force field as an offensive weapon. I let him. And the roof came down.

"What?" said the 14-year-old Cerberus. "You idiot! Captain Britain can't project his force field!" After that, I couldn't do anything right. I ended up with a judge score of 4s and 5s from the right side of the table, and all the other possibilities from the left side. It was my worst judge outing ever.

As I started the design process, the specter of failure was back, but this time it wouldn't in front of six witnesses. The whole gaming world would know.

Enter Michele Carter.

Michele's an editor here at TSR, and, to my great delight, the Queen Geek of Marvel Comics. She could distinguish different versions of Ultron in a police lineup, where all I could say is, "Yup, that's a robot." She's assigned as a co-designer.

We go to work. Michele and I tear into some notes from an early design by former TSR designer Bill Olmesdahl and FORGOTTEN REALMS™ designer Stephen Schend, building a system of superpowers that will make fans of the Ultimate Powers Book bleat with joy. We design a card deck, and then we redesign it, and redesign it again till it's right. Along the way I realize that when I say, "You know, a guy with pheromones," there's a point-two-five second delay before Michele says, "How about the Mandrill?"

A few months later, we emerge with a game. It's got dramatic innovations: game-warping events right on the cards, stats that allow players to bend the rules, ways for the game master to use the players' own cards against them. We're done.

Now the hard work begins.

Marvel Premiere

For the game to succeed, it has to appeal to more people than me, 'cause I can't afford that many copies. So we begin a steamroller series of playtests. Fifty players from WotC and outside groups from St. Louis and London hack into the game for the first time.

Amazingly, it works. We experience hysterical and action-packed comic book adventures: the X-Men demolish much of Salem Center, Rick Jones endangers his friends, the Skrulls come face-to-foot with Galactus, the Librarian debuts with a plan to silence Manhattan, and a team of super-villains discovers Bill Gates is the High Evolutionary.

I realize that we created an RPG that plays satisfyingly in less than an hour. After two hours, my players felt like they'd finished a game, and after four they'd completed an epic. Given that the game comes in a small box and there's no dice to roll away, we've got a game that can be played on a bus.

There's only one problem. The way it's written, only I can run it. The text is a web of cross-referenced footnotes and brain-bending rules extrapolations.

From on high comes Steven "Stan!" Brown. Stan!, the assistant brand manager for DRAGONLANCE, sets to making the rules readable. With the able assistance of his "think tank" (PLANESCAPE® designer Monte Cook, sage Skip Williams, and RPGA stalwarts Jeff Quick and Robert Wiese), he exorcises ultra-complex rules and smooths the whole thing over. We finally think we've got the game we want.

But there's one test left: We have to show it to Marvel. For some reason, they want to make sure we haven't turned Spider-Man into an axe murderer. Anything can happen. They could ask us to redesign the game from the ground up, and we'd have to start over. I chew my fingernails down to the elbow.

The days go by, and then weeks. We await the inevitable phone call from the Marvel licensing guys. Every minute is excruciating. Then the phone rings.

It's Steve and Mike from New York. They tell us they've finished reviewing the game. Suddenly I want eight more weeks of bone-chilling excruciation. Better to delay the harsh judgment.

They say, "Great game, Mike."

The cool thing about phone conferences is that the licensors can't see me dance with glee. Thankfully, they'll never know, unless I'm stupid enough to put that story in print.

Marvel Fanfare

Under the skillful direction of brand manager Sue Cook, the game starts to appear before my eyes. The brilliant duo of art director Ellen Buck and typesetter Angie Lokotz turn my weaselly sketches and chicken scratch into gold. I see covers and card art by the likes of X-Men penciler Carlos Pacheco and personal fan fave Michael Golden. The most colorful and dynamic character sheets in the history of games show up for my review. What was a collection of words starts to look like a high-gloss comic book.

When it's all together, I take it on the road. First to the WINTER FANTASY™ convention, then BayCon, then the Wizards of the Coast Game Center in Seattle, then Origins. I watch people coo over the art and squirm as they deal with the Silver Surfer's ill-considered decision to whack the Absorbing Man with his surfboard.

They say we've got a hit on our hands. I'm even starting to believe them.

So that's the skinny on me and the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game. Check it out; I think it'll blow you away. Me, I've got to get back to work. After all, I know there's fish in this Mana Pool somewhere.

SUMMER JOBS

An adventure for six players in the NEW MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game

by Penny and Skip Williams

Narrator's Background

The heroes have been hired by Mr. Xaine, who claims to be a millionaire philanthropist dedicated to the same goals as Professor Xavier—the peaceful coexistence of humans and mutants. He says he is an acquaintance of the Professor's, and has contacted these heroes based on Charles' recommendation. Since Xavier isn't around, this is hard to disprove.

Xaine has a clinic, dubbed the New Horizons Youth Hospice, ostensibly acting as a halfway house for new mutants whose powers have just manifested. As in the early days of X-Factor, the organization's stated goal is to "rescue" new mutants whose developing powers are causing a problem, bring them to the clinic to be examined for mutant powers, and screen for the Legacy Virus. Then, if the mutants so desire, personnel will arrange to enroll in the Xavier School for Gifted Youngsters. The clinic claims to have made advances in treating the Legacy Virus, including a "blocker" that halts its progress and negates contagion.

In reality, Xaine uses the facility to collect mutants so he can sell them for genetic testing or other unsavory practices. His "customers" include Genetech, Dark Beast, and the Genoshan government. He is most interested in unknown mutants, particularly those with no family ties, so that they disappear quietly.

The heroes themselves largely fit this description. Although they have been known in mutant circles, most have no family and operate alone. Xaine wants their help to acquire new mutants and persuade them to submit to testing. Once the heroes' usefulness in this regard has ended, he intends for them to meet the same fate as the others.

All heroes are offered tiny implants, which they are told will immunize them against the Legacy Virus or block its progress for anyone who already has it. The implant allows infected persons to live indefinitely until a cure is found. In fact, the devices actually give the hero an Ability Boost, doubling Strength and Agility. They also have a Nullification power to shut down mutant powers. Both effects activate automatically on an as-needed basis, or Xaine can activate them remotely. So, for example, whenever Bolt's card draw indicates that the virus flares, his device compensates by doubling his Strength and Agility scores so that he doesn't "feel" sick. When his powers start to flare uncontrollably, the device shuts them down completely for an hour.

Ask each player in turn whether his or her hero wants the implant (don't bother playing out the implantation process for those who say yes). Explain that the heroes know for a fact that one of their number (Bolt) is infected with Legacy Virus. Any heroes who refuse will be scheduled for weekly medical testing just as the residents of the clinic are.

Scene One

Play begins with the heroes leaving Bloomingdale's department store after a successful shopping trip for new clothes and supplies. Mr. Xaine, who gave Skids a credit card to purchase team gear. Unfortunately, they were delayed in checking out because the card's magnetic stripe couldn't be read. (It has been demagnetized by static from the heroes' implants.) As a result, the heroes are the last to leave the store on a rainy night.

As you distribute your packages amongst yourselves and approach the exit, the lights go dim behind you. A man in a Bloomingdale's security uniform scowls at you and mutters under his breath. The door bangs shut behind you, and the click of a lock has a sound of finality. The sky is dark, but Manhattan's lights illuminate the street before you, and countless New Yorkers hustle past on errands of their own. Just then, Skids's cell phone rings.

The call is from Mr. Xaine, who wants the heroes to drop everything (not literally) and investigate a disturbance in Times Square. Xaine suspects that an emerging mutant is behind the ruckus.

If they ask for details, Xaine says curtly that media reports (confirmed by police scanner) indicate a wild animal at the root of the disturbance. Since wild animals rarely prowl Manhattan, this could be a newfound mutant.

Just as Xaine ends the call, the cell phone rings again. This call is from Melinda Perkins, an attendant at the clinic. She tells Skids in a semi-hysterical voice that two patients have locked themselves in the bathroom, and the heroes must come immediately and get them out before they harm themselves.

If the heroes ask for details, Melinda explains that two students, George and Candy, locked themselves in a bathroom—apparently to avoid their weekly checkup and Legacy Virus screening. (Narrator Note: heroes know that screening procedure for the Legacy Virus are very strict). No one at the center can force the door or coax the pair out. Melinda notes that both of them have seemed out of sorts recently and might do almost anything.

The heroes must choose which call to answer first—the Times Square mutant or the teens. Ariel can bring the group to either place quickly. Unfortunately, the nearest door is shut and locked. The party must find an open business or subway entrance before Ariel can create a gateway. Using a public place for a teleporter would create a stir, but won't cause any harm. The heroes could also hail a cab and either ride to the next scene or use the cab door as a teleporter.

Hailing a cab requires a *challenging Willpower* action (c'mon, it's New York!). Finding an open doorway nearby is an *average Intellect* action. If the heroes just to walk to the nearest subway, they can find a doorway automatically.

If the heroes go to Times Square, go

to Scene Two. If the heroes go back to the center, go to Scene Five. If the heroes split up, play both scenes, taking care that each group of heroes gets equal time.

Scene Two—Times Square

The latent powers of teenage mutant Andrew McPhee bloomed in full force during *Hollywood Horror, a Retrospective*, a 12-hour film festival showing at the Rialto theater in Times square. Andrew has Animal Form (Wolf), and a viewing of *An American Werewolf In London* triggered his first change inside the crowded theater. The spectacle sent the patrons screaming into the street. The sudden appearance of a panicked crowd sent the square into chaos.

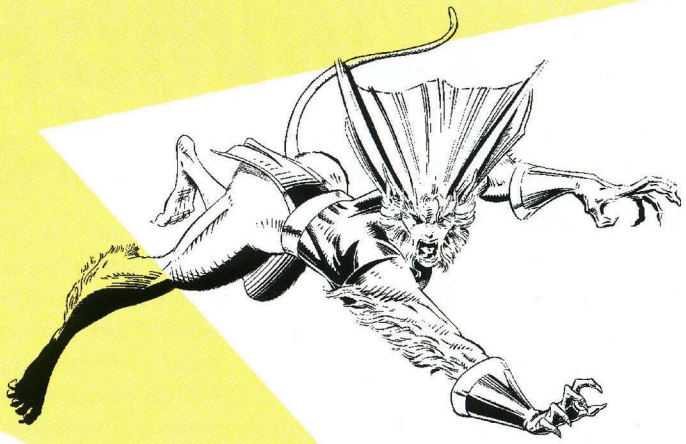
McPhee, still in wolf form, has slunk into an alley nearby to escape the noise and confusion. He is completely feral, and completely frightened. He stays in the alley until someone comes to get him.

Times Square (Immediate Arrival)

If the heroes arrive here directly from Scene One, they find themselves across the street from the theater. Panicked patrons stream past them on all sides. Three smashed cars block the entrance to the theater—the remnants of an accident that took place as frightened theater patrons ran into the street. Two citizens have been injured (by the "werewolf" in his escape). Sirens herald the approach of emergency vehicles. Two motorists involved in the collision are arguing loudly. The doors to the theater are open; two people are visible in the lobby.

The heroes can try to stop one of the panicked theater patrons to gain information. To achieve that end, a hero must successfully grab or tackle one of them, since they don't particularly want to stop and chat (*easy Strength (Strength)* action). The victim of such a tackle resists to the best of his or her ability (*average Strength (Strength)* action each exchange to keep the citizen pinned). A *challenging Willpower (Willpower)* is needed to calm the individual enough to get more than gibbering response. If Feral is present and displaying her catlike appearance, all heroes in the group have the Monstrous Hindrance with respect to calming panicked citizens or questioning bystanders (0 Willpower when trying to get normal humans not to run in terror).

If the heroes manage to calm the citizen, he or she claims that a wild animal was loose in the theater and mauled dozens of people. The citizen doesn't know where the beast is now, but it's probably still in there "eating people." If the heroes don't calm the citizen, he or she screams wildly, causing another citizen (a member of a vigilante citizens' organization) to draw a sidearm and start shooting in the heroes' direction. This escalates the situation, causing more people to panic and more cars to crash.



If they ignore the milling people and go straight for the theater, they must either teleport or fight their way through the mob of citizens and cars careening past the accident. An *average Agility* action is required to make it across the street without colliding with anything. If a collision occurs, make a random draw. If the card has a good or neutral aura, the hero is simply knocked down. If the card has an evil aura, a vehicle strikes the character, inflicting one damage point that cannot be reduced by armor. A force field negates the damage.

As the heroes approach the theater, two more cars head for the wreckage at full speed, brakes squealing as their drivers fight for control on the wet pavement. If the heroes do nothing, they crash into the already wrecked cars, adding to the pile-up. Preventing one car from crashing requires a *challenging Strength* action or an appropriate power.

If asked, the injured people at the scene say they were attacked by a wild dog inside the theater. The arguing motorists ignore the heroes unless grabbed (as running citizens, above). In any case, the motorists know nothing.

The Theater

Inside the theater, the manager is being held up by two ordinary thugs taking advantage of the confusion to make an easy hit. One has a gun trained on him; the other is in the theater office, stuffing money into a bag. If accosted, the one with the gun takes one shot at the heroes, then both flee out the rear emergency exit, which is ajar (that being McPhee's method of exit). The two are not difficult to overcome, if the heroes wish to do so. Their best bet is to knock them out and lock them up, then question the manager.

The manager is more than willing to talk with the heroes (whatever they look like) if they save him and recover his money. He can tell them the following:

- At 9:10 pm, someone started screaming. Two ushers went into the theater to check it out. One of the ushers yelled "It's a dog or something!" and asked for the house lights to be brought up. When the manager hit the lights, everyone started screaming and stampeded out.
- He saw something huge and furry with big teeth rush along a row of seats, starting a panic. It hit the rear entrance hard and broke it open on its way out.
- The manager ran after the big furry thing and saw it disappear down a blind alley next to the theater. When he turned around, two thugs were behind him with a gun. They forced him to open the tills and were taking the money when the heroes arrived.

Pursuing the Beast

If the heroes take the rear entrance out of the theater, go to Scene Three.

If they go back out the front, they are swept up in the increasing confusion outside. They must make two *challenging Agility* actions to reach the alley (Scene Three), or to get to a safe distance from

the tangle. Failure indicates that the hero is surrounded by fleeing New Yorkers and must be saved by his or her companions, or be detained for ten exchanges.

If the heroes wait for the police, they are kept for three hours of questioning regarding the disturbance and robbery. If Feral is with them and showing her cat-like form, the police try to arrest the entire group, assuming that she is the cause of it all.

Robbers (2): Strength 4X, Agility 3X, Intellect 2X, Willpower 2X, Edge 0, Health 10. Equipment: Handgun +3. Calling: Greed.

Police (any number required): Strength 5C, Agility 4C, Intellect 4C, Willpower 3X, Edge 0, Health 10. Brawling, Wrestling, Firearms, Martial Arts, Criminology, Sociology. Equipment: Firearm +4, Billy Club +2, Tear Gas Canister. Calling: Protector.

Times Square (Delayed Arrival)

If the heroes did not come here directly from Scene One, they discover multiple wrecked vehicles surrounded by a traffic jam and a minor riot. Police have cordoned off the theater, and emergency vehicles try vainly to reach the scene.

The narrator can take this opportunity to introduce a guest star with a random draw, if desired. (If the draw is a Doom card, use the event instead of the character.)

The heroes will find it harder to get information if they waited this long. The fleeing patrons have quit the scene, and the thugs have fled with the money.

There are several reporters on hand. The party can get the story from them with an *average Willpower (Willpower)* action. If the reporters see Feral undisguised, they assume she is the beast, and the group faces a barrage of flashes and camera lights—followed by arrest.

To get inside the theater, the group will have to get by the three policemen guarding the entrance. The easiest way is to teleport (the heroes must be careful to arrive out of the guards' sight). Otherwise, the heroes must distract them somehow (a few snarls from Feral would do the trick). A hero can pickpocket a reporter's press credentials with a *challenging Agility (Willpower)* action. Alternatively, the heroes can simply try to bluff their way in, but this requires a *superhuman Willpower (Willpower)* action against the policeman in charge.

Inside the auditorium, the heroes find only blood stains and the smashed emergency exit door.

Scene Three—In The Alley

The Alley (Immediate Arrival)

The heroes can reach this scene from the rear door of the movie theater in Scene Two (which opens onto the street end of this blind alley), or from the street outside the theater. McPhee hides here behind some overflowing trash cans in his wolf form. He is feral and retains only a vestige of his human consciousness—enough that he is very afraid.

If the heroes came here by the most expedient means (rescuing the theater manager and following his directions out the back door of the movie house), no one else has located McPhee as yet. The group has 10 exchanges to get the young mutant out of the alley before the police arrive to cordon off the area.

McPhee is too frightened to be interested in prey. Therefore, he does not attack unless someone tries to grab him or Feral comes too close. (In the latter case, he becomes enraged and attacks her because she smells like cat.)

The best way to get him out of the alley is for Chance to nullify his powers (*average Nullification* action), which turns him back to human form. After he reverts, he is confused and wants to know why he's in this alley. (In reality, he does know, but is hoping it was all some kind of nightmare, and that there's a more reasonable explanation.) He accepts the truth with little fuss, however, as long as the heroes seem to have his best interests at heart and a quick exit in mind.

If neither option is available, the heroes can coax him out from his hiding place by speaking in soothing tones (*daunting Willpower (Willpower)* action); this touches a nerve in his almost-forgotten human side. He does not change back to human form, but will accompany them. Alternately, the group can try to knock him out. If they succeed, he reverts to human form, but slowly; it takes 5 exchanges for the full change to occur.

Andrew McPhee: Strength 5X, Agility 5X, Intellect 4X, Willpower 4X, Edge 0, Health 10. Animal Form 8 (Limit: Wolf Only; Wolf Form: Strength 8X, Agility 7X, Intellect 1X, Willpower 1X. Hindrance: Transformative. Calling: Uncontrolled Power.

Getting Out

If McPhee is back in human form, getting out of the alley is easy. Assuming they put clothes on him, the heroes can take him out the alley entrance, right onto Times Square. From there, they can get him back to the center. No one pays any attention given all the other confusion. A frontal exit is also possible if Ariel disguises McPhee with her Illusion power.

If McPhee is still in animal form, the heroes cannot leave via the front entrance of the alley. If they try to do so, the police spot them and try to take the whole group into custody. If the heroes resist, the police try to arrest them. (By now there are plenty of uniformed officers there to provide backup.) If the heroes are arrested, go to Scene 4 (Jail).

To escape with McPhee in animal form, the heroes must climb the wall of the building at the end of the alley (a bakery), go over the rooftop, and down into a maze of back alleys.

If the heroes take him out the front end of the alley looking both human and unconscious, medics from one of the ambulances try to render aid and take him to the hospital. A *challenging Willpower (Willpower)* action and a darn good explanation are required to convince them otherwise. If McPhee is taken to the hospital, he is effectively out of play and the heroes have failed; the physicians quickly discover that he is a mutant and turn him over to the authorities.

Medics (2): Strength 4X, Agility 3D, Intellect 5D, Willpower 4X, Edge 0, Health 10. Driving, Medicine. Calling: Protector.

The Alley (Delayed Arrival)

If the heroes did not attend to the Times Square matter first, then by the time they get here, a team from the Animal Protection Society is here. They believe that Andrew is really a wolf, escaped from the zoo or some upstate wildlife preserve.

To rescue McPhee now, the heroes must not only get him out of the alley, but away from these well-meaning officials. The APS officials are attended by two policemen armed with standard police-issue sidearms. The police block access to the alley while the officials ready their tranquilizer guns. The heroes can attack and overcome the four APS officials and the two policemen, but any loud disturbance from this area will bring more police. They can use Ariel's Illusion power to pose as APS personnel and try to countermand the team's previous orders (*desperate Willpower (Willpower)* action) or work their way to the front line and grab McPhee after he's been sedated.

APS Personnel (4): Strength 3X, Agility 3X, Intellect 4X, Willpower 4D. Animal Handling. Calling: Protector.

Police (any number required): Strength 5C, Agility 4C, Intellect 4C, Willpower 3X, Edge 0, Health 10. Brawling, Wrestling, Marksmanship, Martial Arts, Criminology, Sociology. Equipment: Firearm +4, Billy Club +2, Tear Gas Canister. Calling: Protector.

Scene 4—Jail

Only use this scene if the heroes have been discovered as mutants or behaved in a way to attract police attention while rescuing McPhee. Assuming they were overpowered (or give up), they are stripped of their possessions and taken into custody by Code Blue. At their facility, the heroes are placed in restraints made for mutants (Nullification 18) and held in special cells until the authorities decide how to handle their case.

The heroes' best bet is to claim that they are gainfully employed by Mr. Xaine. At least one of the officers here has heard of Mr. Xaine, the wealthy, eccentric industrialist. If they provide the authorities with contact information for the clinic, the officers check their story and release them to the custody of a clinic staff member, who arrives to pick them up. (Unbeknownst to the heroes, the staff maintains that the heroes are infected with the Legacy Virus and may be contagious to normal humans if untreated. The authorities process the paperwork very quickly.) The police do not, however, release McPhee if he has been captured. McPhee is lost to the heroes if taken by the police. Xaine has no interest in a mutant known to the authorities.

Other means of escape are up to the players. Code Blue headquarters is a highly secure facility meant for detaining enhanced individuals, and its officers are very dedicated.

Scene 5—The New Horizons Youth Hospice

The heroes can come here from Scene 1 (if they respond to the staff's call before the Times Square incident), or from Scene 3 (whichever escape route they take from the alley), or even from Scene 4. Use the Immediate Arrival information if they have come from Scene 1. Otherwise use the Delayed Arrival information.

If the heroes arrive with McPhee, staffers immediately perform a standard intake procedure (interview if possible and full medical exam) and check him in as a new student. All the staffers praise the heroes to the skies for their expertise.

About the Hospice

The hospice is located in a converted brownstone in Greenwich village. It includes administrative offices, dormitory-style living quarters, a recreation room, and a medical clinic. Unbeknownst to the public (and to the heroes), it also has a secret sub-basement containing a high-security holding area every bit as well equipped as Code Blue's HQ. It is from here that Xaine ships out his mutant "merchandise."

Administrative Offices

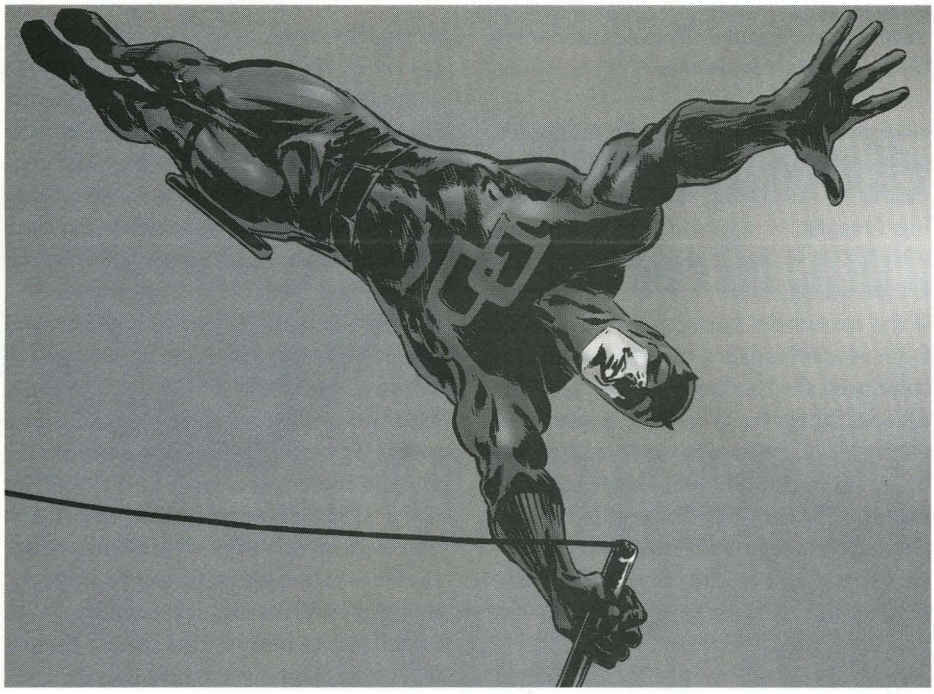
Anyone entering the front door must walk past this glass-walled office. Inside, a reception desk is manned 24 hours a day with a bank of file drawers, and two computer workstations.

The reception desk has a telephone, computer, and printer, plus drawers holding various office supplies. The computer is an unremarkable personal model used to write correspondence and track expenses. Anyone with access to it can search its hard drive (*average Intellect* action). The only unusual item is the Hospice's power bill, which is astronomical (the secret cells eat up quite a bit of power when one is holding a mutant, nullifying the prisoner's abilities). Mabel Kirkland, a student at Empire State University, works at the desk from 10:30 am to 3:00 pm six days a week, answering the phone and doing paperwork. Mabel has no clue about the hospice's true nature .

One computer station is actually a security checkpoint showing views of all the corridors, the rec hall, and the clinic. Video and audio bugs placed throughout the facility collect information. Each bug has its own window on the computer screen. A password allows the operator to monitor the secret holding cells. The hospice's Activities director, Elizabeth Gissing, or one of her assistants constantly monitors this station. Elizabeth is fully aware of what the hospice really does. She and her staff are well paid for their silence and ruthlessness.

The other computer holds all the hospice's true records, including profiles of every teen brought in, sales and shipping records, medical records, and daily logs of the staff's activities. All but the most innocuous information is encrypted. Even the routine information is password-protected. Martin Darley, also a student at ESU, works here three afternoons a week, performing routine maintenance and downloading encrypted information to a disk, which Mabel mails to an address in Manhattan, where Xaine receives it. After each download, Martin erases the information. A real computer wonk, Martin also has installed an impressive array of games and a sizable catalog of internet sites for his own use. Without Computers skill, it is almost impossible to get any information out of this computer. A *superhuman Intellect* action allows a hero access to the database containing personnel records. This includes names of all the staff and all present and past residents. The only unusual things about this information are the staff salaries (very high indeed) and a "release date" for each resident, which also includes a one-letter code. The letter designates which customer "bought" each resident.

Martin Darley: Strength 4X, Agility 3X, Intellect 8C, Willpower 3X, Edge 0, Health 10. Computers, Electronics. Calling: Gloryhound (for computer hacking).



Elizabeth Gissing: Strength 3X, Agility 4D, Intellect 4X, Willpower 4X, Edge 1, Health 17. Marksmanship. Equipment: Blast Rifle +5 (hidden beneath her desk). Hindrance: Claustrophobic. Calling: Greed.

Mabel Kirkland: Strength 4X, Agility 5X, Intellect 4X, Willpower 3X, Edge 0, Health 10. Calling: Idealist.

Residential Area

In the middle of the ground floor, behind the administrative offices, are the rec room, the kitchen, and the dining hall. The rec room is equipped with ping pong tables, pool tables, video games, pinball machines, two TVs, a game table, and an impressive collection of board games. Across the hall from the rec room is the dining hall, filled with tables and self-serve coffee, tea, and soda. The kitchen has all the equipment one would expect of a full-scale cafeteria, including industrial ovens, grill, refrigerators, and separate work areas for preparation of salads, soups, baked goods, and breads.

Behind the communal areas are the residential quarters. Each student has a spacious room with attached bath. Each room has a TV, bed, dressers, shelves, and closet, plus all the comforts of home. Bedrooms have no windows, but the bathrooms each have a skylight.

Basement

Downstairs is the medical center, accessible by a single central elevator next to the rec room, and a service elevator from the kitchen. Each of the two examining rooms is outfitted with nullifier restraints (Nullification 18), plus all standard medical equipment one would find in a doctor's office. Patient records are kept at the nursing station just outside the examining rooms. The nursing station also houses the medical computer, which contains password-protected medical records of residents and staff. These include notations on mutant powers, psychological profiles, and who has checked positive for the Legacy Virus.

The medical center is staffed 24 hours a day. One doctor, two nurses, four orderlies, and a psychologist are always on duty. All are aware of the institution's true nature.

Medical Staff: Strength 5X, Agility 4X, Intellect 6B, Willpower 4X, Edge 0, Health 10. Assessment, Medicine, Psychiatry. Calling: Greed.

Sub-Basement

Below the medical center, accessible via a secured elevator, are four soundproofed isolation cells shielded with four inches of osmium steel (Material Strength 15). Each cell is equipped with nullifier shackles (Nullification 18) and a minimum of furniture. The doors are electronically locked, and made of unbreakable bulletproof glass (Material Strength 12). Gas jets in the ceilings provide a quick method of dealing with outbursts (Poison Gas 8).

These cells are used to hold mutants ready for shipment. Once a mutant has been in one of these cells, he or she is shipped out within the day. A door at the end of the corridor runs between the pairs of cells and leads to a tunnel through which orderlies bring the "merchandise" loaded onto ambulances for transfer to shipping stations.

Immediate Arrival

Two administrative staffers greet the heroes at the door (or wherever they arrive). They explain the situation while escorting the heroes to the dormitory:

"Thank goodness you've arrived! George Phillips and Candy Cotton were to have their weekly medical checkups this evening. When the orderlies went to get them, Candy came along peacefully, but George, who had been scheduled at the last moment, evidently hadn't been told that it was time for his checkup. When the orderlies knocked, he wouldn't come out. The orderlies used their master keycard to open the door to his room, but by then he was locked in the bathroom and had jimmied the lock so they couldn't open it. While they were trying, Candy used her mutant power to phase through the door. They talked in low voices, and in the end, neither would come out. We put a man on the roof almost immediately to watch through the skylight. He says George is still there, but Candy isn't visible. We haven't been able to get through to Mr. Xaine."

George and Candy

George, suspicious of the medical procedures in the facility since his friend Bob had a checkup and didn't return, decided that he didn't want any more checkups. Candy had never had one before, but after talking to George, she decided she didn't want to start. She used her gaseous body mutant power to diffuse through the wall, promising George that she would talk to a lawyer and get help. Only George knows where she went—to the

law offices of Sharpe, Nelson & Murdock.

George is now enduring a siege in his sanctuary. He had intended to climb up and out through the skylight, but the presence of the rooftop guard foiled that plan. At present, he is talking to the guard, using his Emotion Control power to enlist his sympathy. Meanwhile, the orderlies are still working on the door.

Resolving the Siege

The heroes can try to talk George out of his hiding place if they order work on the door stopped (that's George's condition for negotiating). He trusts the heroes more than he does anyone else at the facility, so he tells them his tale through the door. He says the tests he has gone through before were unreasonably painful, and his friend Bob never came back from his; George thinks they killed him. (The official story from the medical staff about Bob is that he tested positive for the Legacy Virus and is in an isolation cell in the sub-basement until his implant stabilizes his condition. In fact, Bob has already been shipped out.) George admits to having convinced Candy to run, but won't tell the heroes where she went unless one of them convinces him with a successful *daunting Willpower (Willpower)* action.

To get George out, a hero must make an exceptionally good argument (*desperate Willpower (Willpower)* action) that includes two promises: there will be no recriminations for his behavior, and that two of the heroes will watch his exam to make sure it goes okay. If they don't convince George to come out within five exchanges, he tries his Emotion Control on the rooftop guard again, this time successfully, and leaves via the skylight.

If George comes out of the bathroom, the medical staff grudgingly allows the heroes to witness the checkup, but arranges a false positive on his test for the Legacy Virus. They "adjust" his implant and put him in an isolation cell. (The heroes are not permitted downstairs to "maintain a sterile environment.") George is shipped out within the day.

Elizabeth Gissing, who has been called in for this emergency, contacts Xaine while the heroes see to George. She relays his instructions that as soon as George is in custody and stabilized, they must recover Candy. Go to Scene 7 when the heroes start to do this.

George Phillips: Strength 6D, Agility 5X, Intellect 4X, Willpower 4D, Edge 0, Health 10. Climbing, Manipulation. Calling: Outcast.

Delayed Arrival

If the heroes do not come here directly from Bloomingdale's, George has already convinced the rooftop guard to help him escape. They arrive to find a search of George's room in progress, the guard being interrogated by Elizabeth Gissing, and the bathroom door off its hinges. Gissing contacted Xaine, who left instructions that the heroes are to find and recover both the escaped mutants—for their own good, of course.

The guard claims that George's arguments suddenly seemed so reasonable. He doesn't know what came over him, but he wanted to help the poor kid. So he pried the skylight loose and helped him out. The guard claims George went south, saying something about going to Poughkeepsie and starting over. He has no idea where Candy went; he didn't see her go.

In fact, George went to the bus station with the intention of buying a ticket home to Poughkeepsie. However, he has gotten a new idea; go to Scene 6 if the heroes proceed directly there.

Scene 6—Bus Station

The heroes can come here from Scene 5 (Delayed Arrival). Feral's tracking skill would be helpful in finding George.

George had planned to go home to Poughkeepsie, but he needed money. So, he began using his Emotion Control (Willpower to panhandle money, making passersby sympathetic toward him.

Two members of the Glorification Church, a Korean religious cult, have noticed his successful panhandling and decided that he would be a wonderful addition to their cause. When the heroes arrive, they have George backed into a wall, trying to convert him.

If the heroes rescue him (Chance should leap at the opportunity to deal the Glorification Church a blow), George talks willingly. He gives them the same story as in Scene 5. This time, he uses his Emotion Control power to engage their sympathy, hoping they will let him go (*average Willpower (Emotion Control)* action to resist). If they do, he gets on the first bus to anywhere. If the heroes then return to the clinic and say they lost him, the story is accepted. However, Xaine decides to sell them off quickly and close down the operation within the week, as a loose mutant can bring suspicion.

To persuade George to come back to the clinic requires a *superhuman Willpower* action, and the promise that at least two of them will witness his medical exam, as before. The group could also simply overpower him and drag him back. If they return him to the clinic, whether or not they witness his exam, they are told that he tested positive for the Legacy Virus and has been placed in isolation. As before, this means that he will be shipped out the next day.

Glorification Church Members (2): Strength 5X, Agility 4X, Intellect 4X, Willpower 5D, Edge 0, Health 10. Intimidation. Calling: Idealist (Committed to the ideals of the Glorification Church).

Scene 7—Law Offices

The heroes can come here from Scene 5 or Scene 6 if they convinced George to reveal Candy's destination. Otherwise, they can examine her file at the center to determine her motivations and guess where she might go. Candy's file indicates that her mutant power is phasing, that she has a strong belief in the power of the U.S. legal system to right wrongs, and that she wants to be a lawyer someday.

Candy has gone straight to the offices of Sharpe, Nelson & Murdock—the most famous lawyers she knows of. She is convinced that once they hear about the strange goings-on at the clinic, they will set things right through the legal system. She phased into the office, and is curled up on a couch in the reception room, waiting for the office to open.

To reach Candy, the heroes must get into the building, find the offices, and get inside. Ariel may be able to accomplish both feats with separate *average Teleportation* actions, or the heroes can try to pick the locks (*challenging Agility* action).

The building has electronic surveillance cameras. Avoiding them requires a *challenging Agility* action. The heroes can

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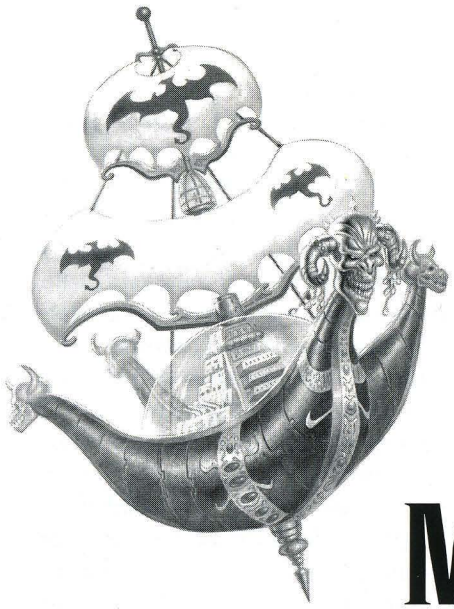

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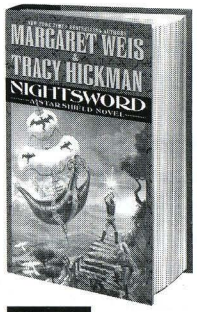

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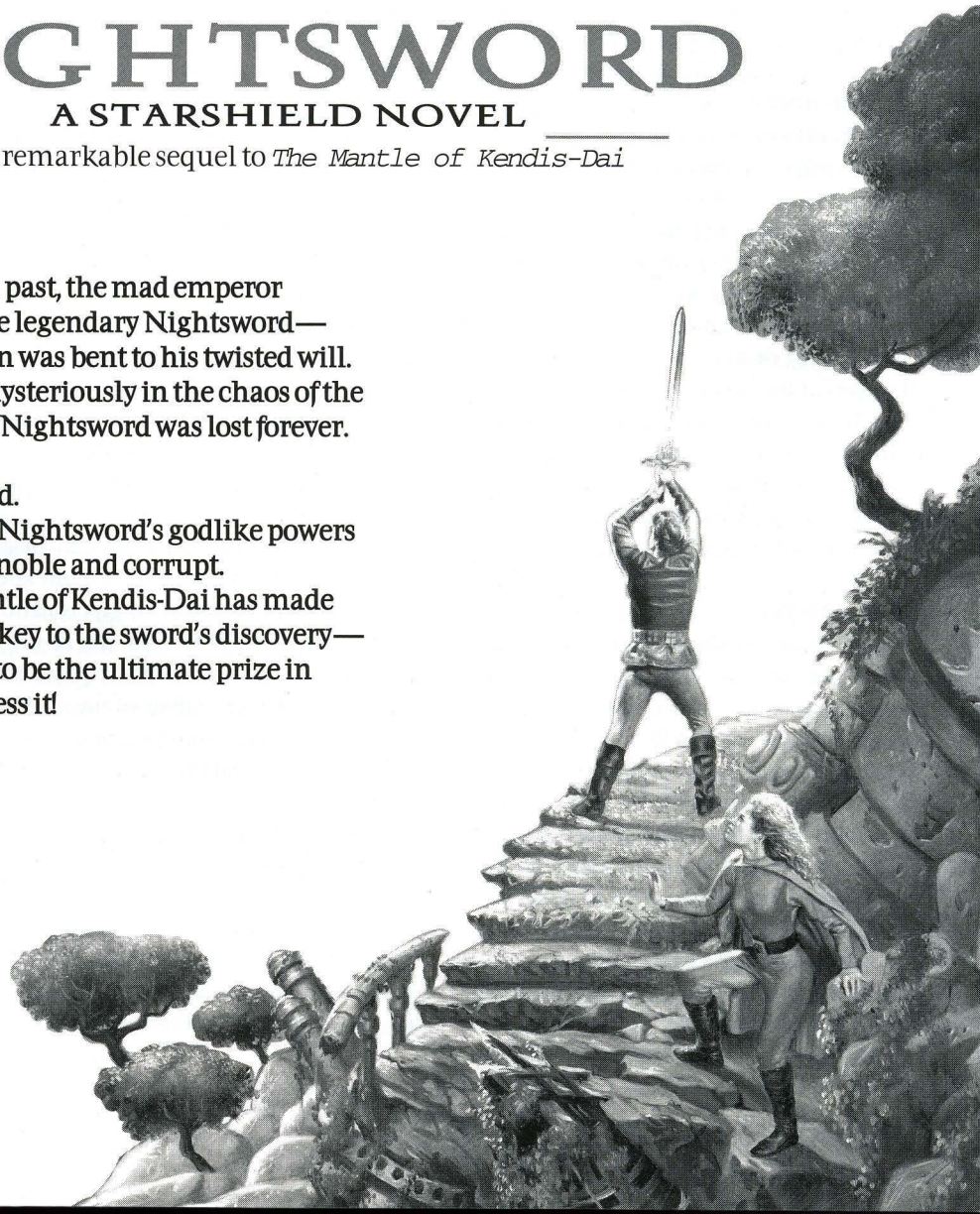

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also accost the night watchman, Harry Saunders, and convince him to let them in (*superhuman Willpower* action) or check the office in question (*challenging Willpower* action). If Harry checks the office, he sees Candy, but she phases out. This causes him to call the police, who take the heroes in for questioning if they are present when the squad car arrives (go to Scene 4—Jail). Meanwhile, Candy hides in an air duct and waits until the offices open to complete her mission.

If the heroes get inside unnoticed, they can talk with Candy. She explains that she had no qualms about her first medical exam until George told her about his friend Bob, who disappeared. He told her other things too—that the tests were painful, that they use restraints to block your powers, and that the staff is mean. She realized that this was a case for the best lawyers in town, so she came here.

The heroes will have a hard time talking her into accompanying them back (*superhuman Willpower* action). She points out that if the operation is clean, the staff there has nothing to fear from an investigation. And if not, why are the heroes working there anyway?

The heroes can try to overpower Candy and take her back to the clinic, but she phases out after one exchange, if she can. Or, they may wait with her for the offices to open and talk to the lawyers together, if desired. Proceed with "The Lawyer" if the heroes decide to do this.

If the heroes drag Candy back to the clinic, she meets the same fate as George—medical exam, positive reading for the Legacy Virus, incarceration in an isolation cell, and shipment the next day.

The Lawyer

Foggy Nelson is the first to arrive in the morning, at 7am. He opens the office, and stares in amazement at the collection of individuals waiting for him. He listens to part of their story, then raises a hand and says that he has to be in court early—they had best talk to Mr. Murdock. Matt arrives next, and ushers the heroes and Candy into his office, where he listens carefully to their story.

Murdock agrees that there is reason to investigate. He asks for a $1 retainer to take their case, arranges for Candy to stay at a hotel, and asks the heroes to return to the center and see if they can look into the computer files for him.

Whether or not the heroes agree to this, Daredevil will monitor the building tonight. He will help only if necessary.

Daredevil game stas are in the main roster book.

Candy Cotton: Strength 5X, Agility 6X, Intellect 5X, Willpower 3X, Edge 0, Health 10. Body Transformation (Gaseous Form) 12. Hindrance: Naive. Calling: Youthful Exuberance.

Scene 8—The Truth

At any time during play, the heroes can begin investigating the odd things happening at the clinic. Bolt may wonder why his powers sometimes shut off suddenly. The heroes may decide that what George and/or Candy told them has merit, or check on the truth of the cover story about the pair's Legacy Virus tests if they have been put into isolation. They may want to find out what really happened to Bob. Whenever and however they become suspicious, the following tactics are available:

1. They can contact the Xavier School for Gifted Youngsters directly. Emma Frost has vaguely heard of Xaine, but has never accepted enrollees from him.
2. They can contact Murdock's law firm (if they have not already done so) or some other New York hero team, and convince someone to investigate.
3. They can try to access the computer records of the facility.
4. They can investigate the sub-basement, which is off-limits to all but specially authorized personnel. The isolation chamber is here, plus cryo-freeze units for transporting mutants and equipment.
5. Overpower a member of the medical staff or Elizabeth Gissing and convince him or her to reveal the truth.

Outside Contact

All phone lines in the facility are tapped. If the heroes call any outside agency, Xaine will be informed within minutes. Unless the heroes act quickly, the staff will try to overpower them, ship them out, and close the facility within the day.

The Computer

Only Martin Darley's computer has the information the heroes need. Hacking into the password-protected computer files unaided requires a *superhuman Intellect* action. If the heroes make the attempt shortly after the incident with George and Candy, someone has left those files open; only a *challenging Intellect* action is required to track down information from the database.

The heroes can also simply ask Darley to show them the computer. He loves to show off, particularly to female heroes. He opens the database, shows them how to get past the security for themselves, and brings up any files they ask to see.

The computer files on each resident show the five-digit resident number, intake date, staff notes, psychological and medical evaluations, known mutant powers, and two strange items: a release date (with a letter code), and a 12-digit serial number. The release date is the date of shipment, the letter code is the purchaser designation, and the serial number is a combination of the resident number and sale price. Darley does not know the meaning of these codes, but Gissing does. The heroes can deduce the probable meaning of these codes with a *challenging Intellect* action, but unless they copy the files to a disk, print out records, or gain other hard evidence, they can't prove their assertions in the end.

The files for George and Candy do not indicate the Legacy Virus, but do show release dates the day after their bathroom incident. Darley can tell the heroes that those dates were changed recently. If the heroes check their own files, they notice that they have been assigned release dates at the end of the summer (or within the week, if they allowed George or Candy to escape).

The Sub-Basement

Voiceprint and handprint identification is required to access the security elevator leading to the sub-basement level. The heroes can capture an orderly and force him or her to take them there, or they can try to disable the security system (*daunting Intellect* action or *average Electrical Control* action for Bolt). If Darley is present, he will happily disable the security system for them upon request. The heroes

can also try to smash their way through the Strength 10 floor of the medical complex (*challenging Strength* (Material Strength) action), but that will generate noise and bring the staff running. Two armored guards secure this level.

To reach the cells, the heroes must overpower the guards, preferably before either of them can hit the alarm switch in the wall. The isolation cells hold George and/or Candy (if the heroes brought them back), plus Billy, another charge who has Radiation Control power. Any incarcerated here beg for release; they are helpless in the nullification shackles.

The heroes can break the prisoners out. Since the walls are soundproofed this won't alert the staff. Taking them out the front is risky; only Ariel's Illusion power might disguise them sufficiently. The best bet is to either teleport away with them (via Ariel's power) or take them out the tunnel. At the end, the heroes find an ambulance parked in the bushes, equipped with more nullification shackles. Inside it are copies of recent bills of lading for deliveries of "merchandise" to specified locations around the city. (These are dropoff points for exchange of merchandise with clients.)

The heroes may hide their escapees in almost any reasonably safe place; the young mutants will await rescue. If they contacted Murdock, Daredevil appears and offers to take them to safety.

Guards (2): Strength 6B, Agility 4C, Intellect 4X, Willpower 3X, Edge 1, Health 17. Brawling, Knives, Wrestling, Marksmanship, Martial Arts. Equipment: Blast Rifle +5, Nullifier Pistol (Nullification 12).

Billy Farr: Strength 2X, Agility 3X, Intellect 2X, Willpower 2X, Edge 0, Health 10. Radiation Control 7. Calling: Outcast.

Interviewing the Staff

The staff members are greedy and unscrupulous, but attached to their hides. If cornered, any of them will spill the beans as to what is happening with a *challenging Willpower (Willpower)* action. Ms. Gissing is cold, greedy, and dangerous, but she too will crack given the proper incentive (an isolation cell works). She knows everything—the nature of the business (selling mutants), the names of clients, and the exact number of mutants who have already been sold (15 from this facility). If possible, she contacts Xaine after the heroes finish with her and tells him the situation before arming herself and her staff for the final confrontation.

However the heroes obtain their information, go to Scene 9 after this.

Scene 9—Xaine

If the heroes snoop into computer files, make suspicious outside calls, or free prisoners, Xaine will know about it in short order from his loyal staff, automated transmissions, or from their absence. When he has reason to suspect the heroes, he visits the facility personally—with six bodyguards.

When Xaine arrives, Elizabeth and her two underlings quietly pull out their Blast Rifles +5 and prepare to back him up. The rest of the staff clears the area and begins erasing computer files, shredding papers, and destroying evidence.

Xaine clicks a button at his belt, activating any implants the heroes have to nullify their powers. The guards attack at Xaine's order. Xaine lets his guards and the staff incapacitate the heroes, helping as needed with his own weaponry, then launches into a villainous monologue.

"Ah, too bad you decided to try for promotions rather than just doing your jobs. Now I'll have to dispose of you early and shut down my operation here. But no matter, I've made a tidy profit from it so far, and I can always open another. Guards, please take them to the ambulance outside."

Remember, Daredevil is still watching over the heroes and will burst in to save them if the fight goes poorly. Since he isn't a mutant, the Nullifier pistol will have no effect on him. When Xaine sees that he will be defeated, he shifts to gaseous form and slips out, swearing revenge. Use some Doom cards here to aid Xaine in his escape..

Guards (6): Strength 6B, Agility 4C, Intellect 4X, Willpower 3X, Edge 1, Health 17. Brawling, Knives, Wrestling, Marksmanship, Martial Arts. Equipment: Blast Rifle +5.

Xaine: Strength 6X, Agility 5X, Intellect 7B, Willpower 5C, Edge 1, Health 17. Assessment, Computers, Super-Physiology, Intimidation, Manipulation. Body Transformation 10 (Gaseous Form), Detection (Mutants) 8. Equipment: Activator (activates Nullification 12 on heroes' implants), Nullifier Pistol (Nullification 12), Blast Rifle +5, Knife +3.

Scene 10—Wrap-Up

If the heroes escape or defeat Xaine, they have options. They can cut and run, taking George, Candy, and/or Billy with them. This probably leads them back to life on the streets.

They can call the police, which will get them taken in with whatever staff remain for questioning. If they have no evidence against Xaine other than their own suppositions, they are placed under arrest—the police are loath to take the word of a group of street urchins against that of an internationally known business mogul. If the heroes have been in contact with Murdock, he arrives to bail them out and take their case.

If the heroes have taken care to collect solid evidence of the clinic's real business (taping a staff member's confession, copying computer files to disk, or capturing one of the villains), they and their charges are exonerated. However, since they are minors, the authorities won't set them free until they have a responsible adult to vouch for them. If they have been in contact with Murdock, he agrees to see to their well-being in the short run. They may also contact Emma Frost, who welcomes them into the Xavier School upon hearing their story.

If the heroes end up in a safe haven of any sort, they each receive a real medical examination. The examiners discern the true nature of the implants and sadly inform Bolt that the device never did halt the progress of the disease. The heroes can have the implants removed if they desire.

If the heroes ensure that their charges are not sold and gather enough evidence to shut down the clinic, give each a 1-point response bonus. Now, more adventures await, and they have a very rich person angry at them....

❑

These heroes are exclusive to POLYHEDRON® Magazine for the adventure, *Summer Jobs*. For pictures and more information, all heroes but Bolt were featured in the limited series, *Fallen Angels*. More info on Bolt can be found in back issues of the *Maverick* series.

ARIEL

Strength 2X, Intellect 6C, Agility 6D, Willpower 5X
Edge 1, Hand Size 3(17)

Skills: Acrobatics, Subjective Physics (see below), Trivia

Powers: Illusion 7
Teleportation 17 (stunt only)
Gateway (Ariel superimposes extradimensional doorways over existing physical doorways, creating two-way gates for anyone to use until she steps through)
Limit: Six-mile radius only

Calling: Thrill-Seeker
Personality: Ariel is a free-spirited anarchist and hedonist who is always living the latest fad. Despite her eccentric behavior, she is a loyal team member who will sacrifice much for her friends and allies.

History: Ariel is from an otherdimensional world known as The Coconut Grove, a bizarre collection of the tackiest fads from across the multiverse. Her race was genetically stable, but the leaders wanted to introduce mutations. Ariel was sent to Earth to lure mutants to Coconut Grove so their powers could stimulate mutations in her race. After she successfully completed her mission, Ariel discovered that she and her best friend from Earth (Chance) were both mutants—and that her government planned to imprison them along with the mutants she gathered. Ariel subsequently helped free the mutants and returned with them to Earth.

They were briefly part of a team of heroes led by Siryn and Multiple Man. But when both were dominated the Shadow King, and their partner-in-crime, the Vanisher, fell victim to a being from the Darkling Dimension, the two girls struck out on their own. Ariel and Chance are currently exploring Earth's wild side, supporting themselves with confidence games and petty theft.

Ariel's power to open extradimensional gateways is a gift inborn to members of her race. As she explains it, anyone can do it "with the right hands and a good understanding of subjective physics." No one on Earth understands "subjective physics" like Ariel does. (Note: Shadowcat once called herself Ariel. She is no relation to this Ariel.)

BOLT (Chris Bradley, Brian Johnson)

Strength 4X, Agility 4X, Intellect 3X, Willpower 2X
Edge 1, Hand Size 3 (17)

Skills: none

Powers: Electrical Control 9

Calling: Outcast
Hindrances: Bruiser (With respect to Electrical Control; use intensity value for damage), Physically Disabled—Legacy Virus
Personality: Living alone, Chris is a depressed and lonely teenager. He is emotionally dependent on his friends.

History: Emotionally rejected by both family and would-be friends, Chris took off to live by himself. Chris left home and lived under the assumed name of "Brian Johnson." He met and acted as sidekick for Maverick, a mutant espionage agent. The two shared the common bond of suffering under the Legacy Virus, a debilitating virus that affects only mutants. There is no known cure for the Legacy Virus at present.

For purposes of this adventure, Chris has gone on the road, and is currently in New York working for Mr. Xaine.

CHANCE

Strength 3C, Intellect 4X, Agility 6C, Willpower 6C
Edge 1, Hand Size 3(17)

Skills: Brawling, Knives, Flinging, Martial Arts, Disguise (hiding her sex), Performing (Acting)

Powers: Nullification 18
Power Amplification 9
Limit: Unpredictable

Calling: Outcast
Hindrances: Hateful (0 in all abilities if she passes up a chance to attack agents and property of the Glorification Church)
Personality: Chance projects the attitude of a tough male street punk, disguising the fact that she is actually a girl in an effort to not show any weaknesses at all. However, despite tough talk and a bitter streak, deep down she is a caring individual concerned with the well-being of her friends and allies.

History: Chance and her parents were members of the Glorification Church, a South Korean political organization masquerading as a church. Its leader, Reverend Yune Kim Park, brought them to the U.S. and promised them citizenship. Instead, he enslaved them along with the rest of his followers.

Chance's parents willingly cooperated, assuming menial jobs and giving their earnings to the Church, but she rebelled and fled the Church. She now fights a one-person guerrilla action against the Glorification Church.

To survive on the streets, Chance adopted the appearance and manner of a tough boy. Since she is slightly built and just entering puberty, she has been able to pull this off.

Chance feels she can trust few people. Her only constant companion is the extradimensional party girl, Ariel. For a time, the girls were part of the Fallen Angels, a team of young superpowered thieves assembled by the Vanisher, later led by Siryn. Since the team dissolved, Chance and Ariel have been relying only on each other, surviving through petty larceny and con games.

FERAL

Strength 9B, Intellect 4X, Agility 11C, Willpower 5B
Edge 1, Hand Size 3(17)

Skills: Brawling, Natural Weapons, Wrestling, Acrobatics, Fast Exit, Manipulation, Survival, Tracking

Powers: Additional Limb—Prehensile Tail 10
Constriction
Claws +7
Enhanced Senses 7 (Smell, Hearing, and Vision)
Teeth +5

Calling: Animal Nature
Hindrances: Frenzied, Monstrous
Personality: Feral's personality is similar to that of a house cat. She is playful and eager for affection and approval, but has a hair-trigger and is capable of great violence when threatened or rubbed the wrong way. She fights like a ravening beast and will slaughter enemies if her teammates don't stop her. Unlike many mutants, Feral revels in her inhuman nature and appearance.

History: Feral grew up in the tunnels under New York City, part of the outcast mutant community known as the Morlocks. Her life has been a fight for survival on the most basic level.

Feral survived the Marauders' invasion of the Morlock tunnels and the ousting of Morlock leader Callisto by the psychotic Masque. However, when she refused to become part of Masque's army of mutants, she was forced to flee for her life. She sought X-Force, and in exchange for protection from the Morlocks, promised X-Force leader Cable she would join his war against the Mutant Liberation Front. Cable agreed, and she became part of the team.

Feral helped fight the Mutant Liberation Front, Black Tom Cassidy, and ultimately Masque's army of Morlocks when they teamed up with the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. However, Feral's savagery in combat drove a wedge between her and the rest of her teammates. Despite Cable's efforts to help her control her violent temper and blood-thirstiness, Feral never quite fit in with a team environment. She eventually left to follow her own course.

GOMI

Strength 3X, Agility 4X, Intellect 7C, Willpower 3X
Edge 1, Hand Size 3 (17)

Skills: Bionics, Computers

Powers:
Telekinesis 11
Limit: Force Bolt Only
Telepathy 4
Limit: Lobster only

Calling: Outcast
Personality: Gomi is a teenage computer genius and a classic nerd. He is introverted and ill at ease in any situation that does not involve computers. He is devoted to the care of his cyborg lobster, Bill.

History: Gomi demonstrated his skills with computers early in life, becoming a scientist specializing in bionics at a research lab while in his early teens. Gomi's experiments resulted in the appearance of his own telekinetic abilities and the augmented abilities of his pet lobsters, Bill and Don. Gomi joined the Fallen Angels, serving as the team's technical expert.

Another Fallen Angels team member, Devil Dinosaur, accidentally stepped on Gomi's pet lobster Don, killing it. Though grief-stricken at his friend's death, Gomi and the remaining lobster, Bill, stayed with the Fallen Angels until they disbanded.

Lobster (Bill): Strength 2D, Agility 3X, Intellect 1X, Willpower 1X, Edge 0, Health 10. Wrestling. Claws +4. Calling: Outcast.

SKIDS (Sally Blevins)

Strength 3D, Intellect 4X, Agility 7D, Willpower 4X
Edge 1, Hand Size 3(17)

Skills: Brawling, Skating

Powers: Force Field 14
Expanded Field, Shield from Energy, Shield from Psionics
Limit: Constant (difficult Willpower action to turn off)
Resistance to Ensnarement 25
Limit: Active only if Force Field is active

Calling: Peace of Mind
Personality: Sally is very protective of those who she considers her true friends, but otherwise seems distant and cool in her dealings with others. She believes strongly in Professor X's vision of mutants using their abilities to defend Earth's people's evil. She currently feels great guilt for her involvement with the MLF, and her unwitting role in unleashing the Legacy Virus.

History: Sally fled her abusive home after her mutant power manifested. She eventually arrived in New York City where, after spending a time with X-Factor and learning to gain some control over her powers, she was imprisoned by the Federal Government under suspicion of being a dangerous mutant criminal.

She was rescued from captivity by the Mutant Liberation Front, a terrorist group. She joined with the only person she trusted, a young mutant named Rusty Collins, in their terrorist activities. Sally and the MLF faced X-Factor and X-Force in battle. During the final confrontation, Sally turned her back on the MLF and stood with the heroes. The engagement resulted not only in the deaths of MLF leader Stryfe and Rusty Collins, but the horrifying release of the deadly Legacy Virus upon the world.

Although Sally believes in using her powers for good, she does not actively seek the super hero life. She would prefer to leave a peaceful, normal life, if possible. She recently fought alongside X-Force again, albeit reluctantly.

THE BALANCED SUPER TEAM

What makes a team great? More importantly, what is it that makes some of the best super teams in the comics the best? There are three basic elements, the "three Ps": the powers the team members have, each character's personality, and the priorities of the team. Here, we're going to take a look at how to create a balanced super team with the elements of greatness using the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game. (Of course, you could use another superhero game system you prefer, I suppose).

by Steve Kenson

Powers

One of the first things you think of when creating a hero is what powers he or she will have. One of the things to consider when creating a team of heroes is: what powers will each member have? A super team needs a variety of heroes with different powers in order to be well-balanced. Take a look at the Fantastic Four; they have a very different set of powers. Each member of the FF can do something unique. The same is true of most super teams. Here are some of the different classes of powers to consider when putting together a team:

Blaster: The Blaster's main power is some kind of ranged attack like Cyclops of the X-Men. The very name indicates that this is usually an energy blast, but it could also be a "matter" blast like Hydro-Man's water cannon hands. The hero might also control energy in some form, like the Human Torch.

Gadgeteer: A Gadgeteer specializes in technology of one form or another. It may be a suit of power armor like Iron Man or MACH-1, or a harness or toolkit combining different gadgets. Many gadgeteers can fill other roles on a team, serving as Blasters or Strongmen depending on the style of powers. Some have such a vast array of technology they are Wizards (see below).

Martial Artist: The Martial Artist is a master of combat, generally unarmed combat, like Iron Fist or Captain America. A Martial Artist might also be good with a weapon, like Cap's shield or the Swordsman with his namesake blade.

Martial Artists often don't have any real powers. Such heroes are usually extremely well-trained and push themselves to the limits of human ability, but mostly, they're still "only" human.

Mover: The Mover is fast, either on the ground, like Quicksilver, or in the air, like Northstar from Alpha Flight. Some Movers can teleport instead of conventional movement, but the key is that the Mover gets around, and quickly.

Psionic: A Psionic uses the powers of the mind, like telepathy, clairvoyance and telekinesis. A Psionic may have only one *really good* power like Karma's Mind Control, or many powers like Phoenix.

Shapeshifter: A Shapeshifter changes form in some way. It might be stretching (Mr. Fantastic), size alteration (Giant-Man and the Wasp), or imitation (Mystique). These are good all-around heroes to have. They're not wonderful in combat, but they can do things no one expects, which is often just as valuable.

Strongman: The Strongman (or Strongwoman) is super-strong and usually tough as nails. It's not hard to think of examples in this category, like the Hulk, She-Hulk, or the ever-lovin' Thing. Strongmen are the backbone of many super teams.

Wizard: A Wizard has a vast array of powers capable of doing virtually anything. Wizards don't all practice magic like Dr. Strange; some use mental reality alteration like Franklin Richards or the mutant/magic mix of Scarlet Witch to achieve their effects.

The key point to a Wizard is that he or she is capable of doing almost anything. The trick with including a Wizard in a team is to make sure he or she has some kind of built-in limitation to keep all of the other heroes from looking bad. For example, Dr. Strange has to cast spells and doesn't have a lot of power over the physical world; Franklin's powers are still maturing and unreliable; and the Scarlet Witch has only limited control over her hex- spheres.

Overall, a team needs a balance of powers. For example, the Fantastic Four has a Blaster (the Torch), a Psionic (Invisible Woman), a Shapeshifter (Mr. Fantastic) and a Strongman (the Thing). The original X-Men had two different Blasters (Cyclops and Iceman), a Mover (Angel), a Psionic (Marvel Girl) and a Strongman (Beast). It's not necessary to have one of each type, and there can be some overlap between types, but a good mix will make for a good team.

Villain teams on the other hand, don't have to be quite as balanced. In fact, this lack of diversity is some villain teams' greatest flaw. Villain teams such as the Wrecking Crew are all Strongmen, with a little Blaster thrown in, so a well-balanced Hero team with a Mover and a Psionic has an immediate advantage.

Personality

The next element of a team is the personalities of the members. How do they fit together? Not every team fits together smoothly, and you may not really want them to. Sometimes there are personality clashes (such as Ben Grimm and Johnny Storm, or basically all of the X-Men).

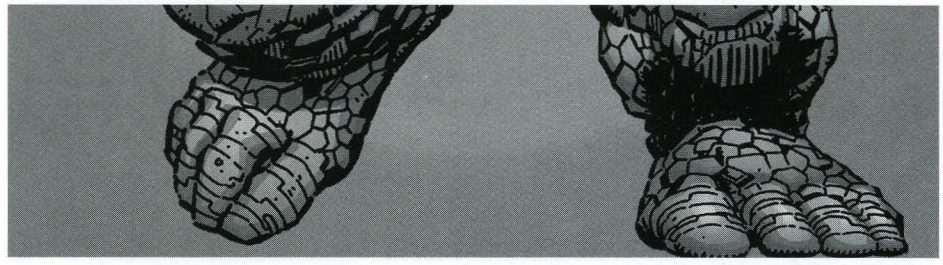
Every member of the team has a different role to play, no matter how well or how badly everyone gets along. Again, some team members play more than one role, wearing different hats. For example, Reed Richards is the leader of the Fantastic Four, but he's also the Thinker of the outfit. Certain personalities work better together, tinker with them to find out the best combinations. Some general personality types show up a great deal in super teams. Each is often associated with certain Callings from the Marvel game, which are listed afterwards.

Leader: The Leader is not just the person in charge of the team. Usually, the character also has a natural ability for leadership, and the drive to pull it off.

The Leader feels responsible for the other team members—their lives are in his or her hands. Many Leaders take responsibility for everything and tend to blame themselves when something goes wrong. The Leader shoulders a heavy burden. Common Leader Callings include Exemplar, Guardian, Majesty, Mentor, and even Soldier.

Strongman

Loner/Powerhouse



Thing

Loner: Loners don't need the team, don't want to be in the team and would much rather do things solo. At least that's what they'll tell you.

Loners keep to themselves for the most part. They're usually mysterious about their pasts, their motivations, and even their powers and abilities. They often have some serious problems, and the team may be the only home they have (they're loners for a reason). Over time, a Loner may develop close friendships with other members of the team, but they remain suspicious of strangers.

Even though he guest-stars in everyone else's book, Wolverine is one of the ultimate Loner characters, as is Machine Man, separated from humanity by his android nature. Loner Callings include Animal Nature, Idealist, Outcast, Peace of Mind, Repentant, Uncontrolled Power and Vestige of Humanity.

Novice: A Novice is a fresh-face and a fresh viewpoint in the team. Everything is new to him or her. Novices have energy, drive and hope, but not a lot of experience to back it up. A Novice can be quite naive or idealistic, and may not have the experience to deal with every new situation that comes up. Their teammates often feel protective of them, or else think they need a few lessons from the school of hard knocks. Cannonball is the Novice member of the X-Men, just as Kitty Pryde once was. More recently, Jolt is a novice hero with the Thunderbolts. Novice Callings include Adventurer, Idealist, Protector, Responsibility of Power and Youthful Exuberance.

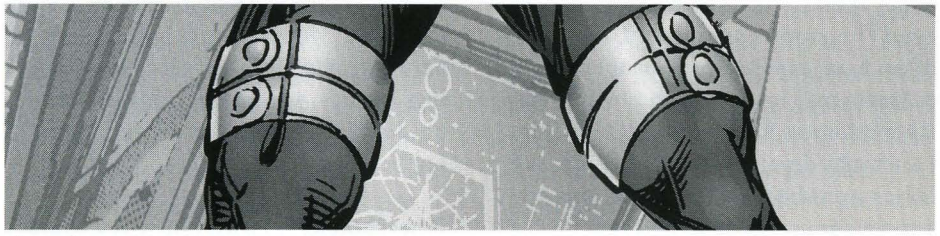
Powerhouse: A Powerhouse is a character strongly tied up in his or her powers, which are usually quite strong and often out of the character's control. Powerhouses live in fear of their powers accidentally hurting someone and seek to master their abilities as much as possible.

This is an ongoing struggle for the character. Rogue is one such character, along with the Scarlet Witch and Phoenix. A Powerhouse could have almost any Calling, but the most common by far are Responsibility of Power and Uncontrolled Power.

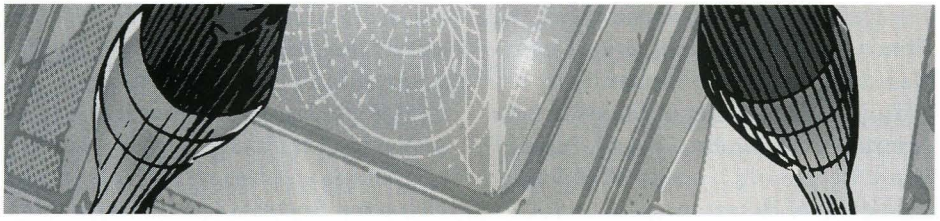
Sensitive: The Sensitive understands the feelings and concerns of others (or at least tries to). Sensitives value life and usually have a strong moral code of their own. This can cause problems when the Sensitive's morals conflict with the actions of another member of the team. Storm was a Sensitive for the X-Men when she conflicted with Wolverine over the issue of using lethal force in combat. Sensitive Callings include Exemplar, Idealist, Mentor, Protector and Repentant.

Supporter: In many ways, the Supporter is the backbone of the team. He or she is always there to lend a hand, make peace, and keep everyone together through the tough times. Supporters tend to be very understanding and amazingly patient with the quirks and habits of other people. They can also be very tough when their "family" (the team) is threatened. Good Supporter Callings include Guardian and Soldier.

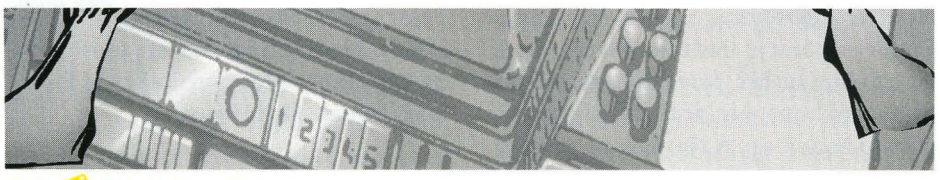
Blaster



Leader



Cyclops



Swashbuckler: The Swashbuckler is the life of the party, the vital spirit of the team, the jokester and fun-loving teammate who livens things up. Swashbucklers are out on the edge and always ready with a jibe or quick comeback. Although sometimes hot-headed and impulsive, Swashbucklers do manage to get things done. Nightcrcawler and Beast are two great examples of this type. Mmajor Swashbuckler Callings are Adventurer, Gloryhound, Thrill-Seeker and Youthful Exuberance.

Thinker: The Thinker of a team is the smartest or most insightful character, the person who notices things and comes up with solutions to the tough puzzles the group faces. Thinkers are often a touch overconfident, or somewhat separated from others by their intellect. Some Thinkers are in charge of a team (like Mr. Fantastic) while others help out when and where they can (like Kitty Pryde in the X-Men and Excalibur). Thinkers tend to have cerebral Callings like Explorer or Mentor.

As with powers, a team needs a good balance of personalities. The Fantastic Four has a Leader/Thinker (Mr. Fantastic), a Supporter (Invisible Woman), a Swashbuckler (the Human Torch) and a Loner/Powerhouse (the Thing).

Priorities

The guidelines above help to create a balanced super team, but what really holds a team together is their priorities, what things the team considers important, what they have in common. Some teams have only one or two priorities, like protecting the world or fighting crime. They tend to be the most loose-knit, like the Avengers. Members come and go and the team composition changes a great deal over time. Teams with more priorities tend to be closer-knit and stick together.

Other people have been members of the Fantastic Four, but the team always returns to Reed, Sue, Johnny and Ben. New X-Men appear and old ones leave, but the team doesn't accept just anyone, only mutants, and you have to prove yourself to be considered an X-Man. Some common priorities are given here, but don't limit yourselves to only these. There are many other possibilities.

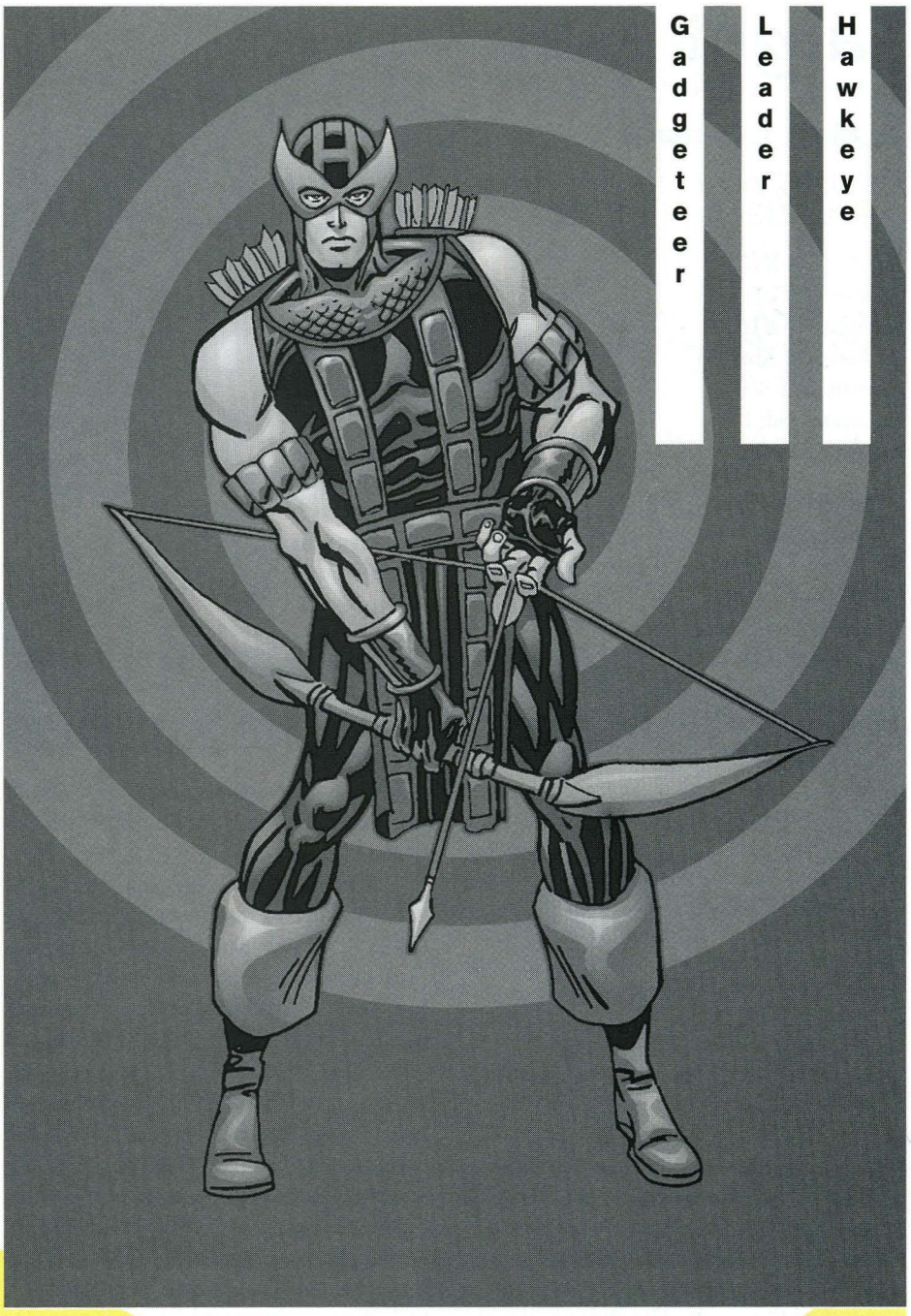
Common Background: The members of the team share some common element in their background (all mutants, all teens, all aliens, all mystics, etc.) or they may have known each other before getting their powers. Perhaps the members all went to school together, or came from the same home town.

Common Enemy: The team has a single arch-enemy they must unite to fight again, like Dr. Doom and the Fantastic Four, or Magneto and the X-Men. The threat of the enemy helps keep the team together. Even if they argue like cats and dogs, the team-members always managed to pull together to face and outside threat.

Common Goal: The team-members all want to achieve the same goal. It might be protecting their city, country or world from danger, exploring the universe, achieving equality and acceptance for mutants, or protecting the environment. Not all of the members may agree on how to go about achieving their goal, but everyone in the group agrees that the goal is important.

Common Origin: The characters all got their powers the same way. For example, the Fantastic Four were all affected by cosmic radiation. Other groups could all be granted their powers by the same event, being, or cause.

Family: The characters are all members of the same extended family, like the Fantastic Four (they're a tight-knit group in the FF) or the Royal Family of the Inhumans. They might be siblings, cousins, or more distant relations. Their powers might come from family heritage, or a common origin. Marvel's Clan Destine presents a story of a super-powered family in hiding from the outside world.



Mentor: The team has a patron, mentor or teacher who brought them all together, like Professor X did with the X-Men. Generally, the mentor doesn't actively participate in adventures, only advising from the sidelines.

Outcasts: The members of the team are all outcast from normal society in some way, so they stick together out of a mutual need for support and protection. Many mutant groups like the X-Men and the Morlocks are examples of this.

Mystical characters like the Midnight Sons are also outcasts of a sort, living in a strange world normal people wouldn't understand.

Secret: The members of the team are all hiding something. It may be the same secret, such as the Thunderbolts, who hid the fact they were actually villains, or X-Factor, who originally hid that they were mutants. Or each member may have his or her own secret to hide. If the group was brought together by a mentor, perhaps it is because he or she knows all of the characters' secrets!

Target Man

A hero for the classic Marvel RPG

by Mark T. Barnabo

Base of Operations: Toronto, Canada
Secret Identity: Louis Sirr Age: 30

Fighting: Gd(10)
Agiltiy: Gd(10)
Strength: Gd(10)
Endurance: Am(50) Health: 80
Reason: Rm(30) Karma: 50
Intuition: Gd(10)
Psyche: Gd(10)

Powers

Regeneration—Am(50)
Recovery—Am(50); not restricted to one use per day
Absorption—Un(100); all kinetics
Kinetic bolt—Un(100); 20 areas

Group Affiliation: Dept. H
Resources Gd 10
Popularity Ty(6)

Limitation: Can only use kinetic bolt if he has absorbed 100 extra health points. When used, the bolt reduces his Health to its normal maximum.

Talents

Medicine, Law Enforcement, Genetics

Contacts

Toronto Medical Research Commission, Toronto Police, Department H

History

Louis Sirr was never very lucky. Orphaned at an early age, Louis never fit in. He was bounced around from foster family to foster family until he ran away and joined the circus. The circus had one use for the poor lad—the dunking booth. There, Lou learned the art of taunting, goading people to pay a dollar for three shots at dunking him. Lou was great at this; it seemed that he had finally found his calling. But, the department of social services finally caught up with him and placed him in another foster home.

This foster home worked out. His wealthy foster parents were both doctors, and wanted him to follow in their footsteps. Inspired, Lou's natural intelligence manifested He graduated med school at the top of his class, and got a job with the Toronto Medical Research Commission.

While there, Lou was involved with a genetics experiment. A being known as Madcap had been caught, and some sample DNA donated to the Commission. If Madcap's powers could be implanted in the human genetic code, it would be the biggest breakthrough in medical history. Imagine paralyzed people regrowing damaged nerves, or trauma victims recovering from mortal wounds!

After a year of research, the Commission threatened to pull the plug on the experiments due to lack of progress. Louis was desperate for results—so he took an experimental serum. The shock of the change to his DNA should have killed him. Instead, Lou became resistant to injury, with tremendous powers of regeneration and recovery. He also gained the power to absorb and discharge kinetic energy. The Commission was impressed, but further tests proved lethal in 99% of test subjects—Lou finally got lucky.

After that, Lou joined Department H to better understand his abilities. He could absorb extra power and then discharge it in a kinetic bolt. Energy beyond what he could store was dispersed harmlessly, causing Lou to glow slightly.

After budget cuts, Department H closed Lou's branch. Depressed and unsure of how to use his powers, Louis saw a new superhero on TV, Niceguy. Niceguy cleaned the streets of Toronto of crime—and was getting popular. Louis decided this was his chance to become a hero, and went out to help.

When he reached the crime scene, Niceguy had finished most of the baddies, but one thug pointed his gun at a reporter. Louis jumped in the way and dared the guy to shoot. So, the thug emptied the clip into him. Lou began to glow slightly, and then the thug was knocked unconscious by Lou's biokinetic blast. He was a hero! At least until the reporter decided that he was Niceguy's sidekick. And that his name was Target Man.

Being a sidekick wasn't so bad, and Niceguy *was* a nice guy. But, NG got all the glory and the interviews, while Lou stayed behind and talked to the police. The public believed Niceguy was the hero, and Target Man the bumbling sidekick. The police however, saw Target Man as a responsible hero, and Niceguy as a goofball. Niceguy gave Target Man a costume that fit his name—a white bodysuit with red concentric circles on his chest, back, and full hood-style mask.

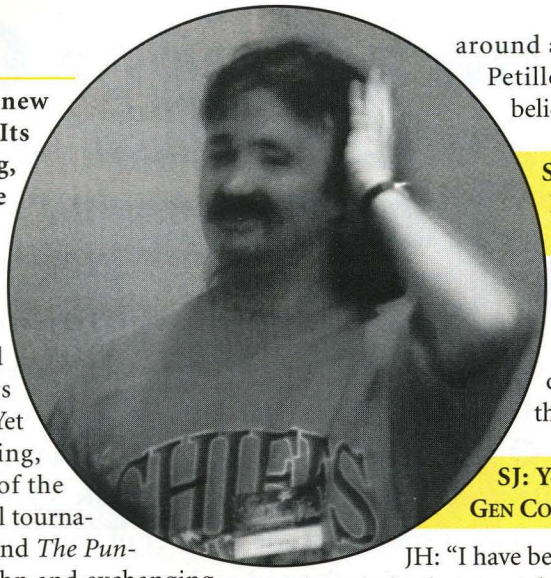
Lou is angry, tired of being constantly overlooked by the media. He wants to prove that he is hero so badly that he will take unreasonable risks. Louis is a truly selfless individual who will put himself in danger to save his friends without hesitation.

Lou works as a sidekick for any less-than-serious hero. He is especially useful with a popular "silly" hero (Popularity of RM(30) or greater).

Spotlight on John Hinkle

by Stephen H. Jay

The "RPGA Member Spotlight" is a new feature in POLYHEDRON® Magazine. Its purpose is to recognize hardworking, but often invisible members at the core of the Network's success.



John Hinkle is well-known in the Midwest as a tournament author, the Regional Director (RD) for Kansas, and a member of the Role-Playing Gamers Association of Kansas City (RPGAKC). Yet outside the Midwest, this hard-working, creative, and enthusiastic supporter of the RPGA is known only for a few successful tournament modules, such as *Odd Man Out* and *The Punishment Of Pennell*. After talking to John and exchanging emails, I learned that he has done much more for the Network than write modules...

SJ: Outside the Midwest, your are probably best known for your tournament modules. What else have you written?

JH: "There were two Pennell modules, *The Punishment Of Pennell*, and *Pennell's Punishment*. Together they form a three round tournament. I also wrote *Dragonsbane*. Soon to come will be a LIVING CITY™ version of *Judgment Day*."

SJ: What motivated you to write these modules?

JH: "I wrote these modules because I am a big fan of strong characters. I grew bored of characters I could not remember the day after I played them. Most players can remember my characters."

SJ: You're a member of the RPGAKC, one of the most active clubs in the network. How did that start and what do you do for the club? You're a Charter Member, right?

JH: "Member number five, to be exact. After a failed attempt at forming a RPGA club in the mid-eighties, someone called me and told me of a local group that was forming. The central contact point at that time was "Dungeon BBS." I don't think the guild would have survived without the daily contact the BBS provided. I hold no office now, but have held all but one office in the past. My favorite job was as Convention Coordinator (for the RPGAKC event, ShaunCon). I have also been coordinating the Great Plains Regional event for five of its six years."

SJ: You are the RD (Regional Director) for Kansas. How did that happen?

JH: "When Scott Douglas became the director of the RPGA he could not contact the (then current) RD for Kansas. Scott asked around and Tom Prusa, Jean Rabe, and Craig Petillo recommended me. As for the date, I believe it was July of 1995."

SJ: What do you do to encourage new RPGA membership and to motivate current members to be more active?

JH: "The best way to sell the RPGA to a new member is to sit them down at a RPGA event. The more players we sit down, the better. I push ShaunCon and the RPGA events as much as I can."

SJ: You frequently attend and work at the GEN CON® Game Fair, don't you?

JH: "I have been at all but three GEN CONS since 1979. I have judged at most, but not all. This year I will return for the third year as the Open Marshall."

SJ: You also have an alter-ego, a Living Jungle character, who has gained some notoriety. You and some other Midwest players came up with a tribe of saru of outstanding cowardice...

JH: "My character, the Great Boo, is chief of the dreaded Boo tribe. While not an official tribe, it has made the Jungle fun for me and others. If the Boo had the guts they would apply to an official tribe. I find the LIVING JUNGLE™ campaign a refreshing change from the magic-rich LIVING CITY setting. [The story of the Boos can be found in POLYHEDRON issue #113 —SJ]

SJ: What do you do when you're not gaming?

JH: "I am married to my wife Karen and have two kids, Paul (9) and Lindsay (4). I am 38 and have been playing AD&D since 1977. I work for the University Of Kansas Medical Center. I manage the Document Management, Art, and Customer Service divisions for the Department of Printing and Document Management.

What does all that mean? I am a computer geek without the pocket protector. But I do have a beanie propeller."

(If you know someone who positively contributes to the RPGA experience, write up an article and tell us about them! You may also contact Stephen Jay at <SJAYKahn@aol.com>)

[Editor's note: due to the extreme rarity of a wild Hinkle, our photographers were only able to catch this fuzzy picture. The subject here appears happy, but confused.]

You Might be a P wer Gamer if...

by Ed Gibson

❁ coming up with a character name is the easiest part of character creation. ❁ your character uses two weapons and isn't a ranger. ❁ you have a spreadsheet set up so you can model possible characters. ❁ a calculator is as necessary to character creation as a rule book and dice. ❁ you prefer point-based character creation because dice-based systems are "too random." ❁ you ever played a character class published as an NPC class in DRAGON® magazine. ❁ all of your magic items won't fit into only one bag of holding. ❁ your character's highest attribute score exceeds the total of his three lowest attribute scores. ❁ character creation requires three or more books. ❁ your character has more rings than fingers. ❁ you go back and change your attribute scores after you start picking skills. ❁ a major consideration in choosing a kit for your PC is the number of bonus proficiencies. ❁ the special abilities granted and spheres your PC can access are the main factors in choosing a deity. ❁ the game comes to a halt after your PC loses a point from his Constitution attribute while you recalculate his hit points. ❁ your choice of weapon proficiencies is influenced by the fact that 70% of magic swords are long swords. ❁ you ever loaned the DM a book so he can read about the special abilities of the character kit you want to play. ❁ you ever spent more time on creating a character than the campaign lasted. ❁ your PC really cares about the copper pieces in the dragon's hoard. ❁ the only time that you've played a character of the opposite sex was when a kit or deity required it. ❁ you ever argued for multi-classed humans or dual-classed demi-humans. ❁ you ever brought friends along to the game, so you could run their characters too. ❁ you have a binder with rulings from the Sage Advice column. ❁ your character charges the other PCs interest on loans. ❁ you think that listing bonuses for attribute scores over 18 was one of the big improvements in the AD&D® 2nd Edition Player's Handbook.

Special bonus signs for LIVING™ campaign players!

...you put away all of your dice except for *one* d20 following a LIVING CITY™ tournament.

...your LIVING DEATH™ PC has ever seen a magic item.

...you have a soldier PC in LIVING DEATH who has a higher Intelligence than Strength.

...the stack of certificates for your character is thicker than the Player's Handbook.

...your RPGA campaign player level is higher than your RPGA classic player level.

...creating a LIVING DEATH character with non-duplicated attribute scores requires two or more attempts.

MY LORD TIGER

A SHORT SAGA® SYSTEM ADVENTURE

by Gregory Detwiler

Preface

The party is a group of mercenary freelancers who have been hired by the local ruler, the Maharajah of Shapur, to deal with a man-eating tiger that has killed more than 40 local people. (Because of the tense situation on Shapur's frontiers, the Maharajah cannot send any of his troops into the poor, stricken Maiwand district to deal with the beast.) The locals have named this cat Jambha Khan, meaning "King of Jaws."

The only reinforcement the Maharajah will give the party consists of a local guide, Shudra Dasya, a cringing coward who seems to fear the tiger more than the Maharajah. Before the adventure is over, the heroes may share his opinion.

Characters

Shudra Dasya: Human, male, groveling and afraid demeanor, Thief. Co 4, Ph 4, In 6, Es 5, Dmg +3 (bludgeon) Def 0.
A thief who got caught plying his trade, Shubra was punished with the task of guiding the party to and from the tiger's plateau. The fact that he'll be beheaded if he returns alone is all that keeps him from deserting the party. He is a snivelling mouse of a man, who shivers despite the heat, referring to the tiger as "Jambha Khan" or "my lord tiger.".

Jambha Khan: Tiger: Co 6, Ph 20, In 2, Es 2, Dmg +10, Def -2, rake.
An enormous mass of muscle and stripes, the tiger is cpaable of carrying a hero in its jaws and can still outrun humans in the jungle. It hunts with sharp cunning, and has become a man-eater due to the loss of game on the jungle plateau where it makes its home.

Setting

The plateau has sheer cliffs on all sides. A single trail provides access between the plateau and the lowlands, running through the jungle on the way up. This provides a consistent place to find the tiger, but being near the path also lets the tiger know exactly where the party is.

Opening Salvo

As soon as the heroes near the summit at the start of the adventure, the tiger ambushes them. The path borders the steep cliffs at this point, with scrub brush along the edge.

Suddenly, a loud coughing roar seems to shake the rocks around the heroes, terrifying the horses. Unless the heroes make *Desperate (20) Willpower* actions to calm them, the horses and pack mules will stampede over the cliff.. This causes the loss of almost all of their equipment, except what they're wearing.

Any mounted heroes must make a *Challenging (12) Agility* action to keep from being tossed off the side of the cliff. After the initial assault, Jambha Khan attacks the hero in the lead with its powerful bite. However, he quickly turns tail when he sees other party members coming to deal with him.This should be the party's first taste of the tactics of a professional man-hunter: attack from ambush, strike hard and fast at a lone target, and swiftly retreat before reinforcements can aid the victim.

Somehow, Shudra Dasya has survived, even though his horse fell off the cliff. He speaks fearfully of "my lord tiger" in an attempt to get the heroes to abandon their task

At the bottom of the cliff, salvage attempts prove futile. Everything is broken, lost, or otherwise spoiled. The heroes have lost their mounts, pack horses, and any gear not securely on their own persons. They must brave it on their own.

Recovery and Survival

Now, the heroes must live off the land and kill Jambha Khan before he wipes out the entire party with his guerrilla warfare.

Unfortunately, there is no game remaining on the plateau due to the tiger's hunting and a recent blight. Virtually the only food left is wild fruit, and that is not easy to find. Finding edible fruit is a *Challenging (12) Perception* action. Each success will gather one day's food for the whole party.

Otherwise, the jungle is a minor nightmare; emphasize its alien nature as you describe it. The trees are several hundred feet tall, their tangled roots are often piled twenty feet high. The dangling vines are as thick as a man's wrist and the flowers—violets and daisies for the most part—grow as large as saplings.

Let the party decide where to pitch camp at night. As stated above, the path is the only means of reaching the plateau from the lowlands. Since the tiger has been raiding the lowlands, he uses it all the time. Mention a clearing beside the path as an obvious choice to keep an eye on the tiger's comings and goings.

Of course this means the party will undergo a series of hit-and-run attacks from the moment they make camp to the moment either they or Jambha Khan are slain (see below), but at least they'll be doing their job. Camping elsewhere will be safer, but the tiger will just elude them and resume raiding. Let the heroes see the tiger return once with a dead peasant in his jaws to get the picture. Shubra Dasya knows this, but will not volunteer the information, since he doesn't particularly want to be in the tiger's way.

Starting a fire in the wet jungle is a *Daunting (16) Reason* action. Without the light of a fire, the party will be sitting ducks in the dark; Jamba Khan will have an immeasurable advantage. It may take severa ltries, and Dasya may be of some assistance if anyone can put up with his simpering long enough to get him to help.

Hunting the Man-eater

Jamba Khan has a natural camoflague, and knows the terrain very well. He cannot be spotted (without magic) through the trees and dim light until he is ten feet away. Even if they know he's there, the tree trunks and tangled roots provide cover, making it nearly impossible to get a clear shot.

Unless the party can catch Jambha Khan in the clearing by the mountain path, returning from a raid or raiding them, they will never be able to tackle him in the open.

If the heroes want to set a trap for the tiger by digging a pit or setting snares, let them. Their human scent will remain in the area, warning the tiger. Unless they are experienced trappers, they won't know enough to wash themselves and their gear thoroughly to hide their scent.

When fighting the party, Jambha Khan will never stand and battle to the death. He generally flees after taking one or two good hits. A single wound might not stop him if he's about to finish off an enemy, but he always flees upon losing at least half of his Physique points. After that, he stays hidden until his wounds have healed.

Hunting the Party

Jambha Khan hunts the party with cunning, ambushing from the surrounding jungle at every opportunity. Remember that the enemy is in his natural habitat, and his stripes are made to blend in with the surrounding jungle. Therfore, the heroes must make a *Desperate (20) Perception (Agility)* action to detect his approach in most instances. With the abundant cover, Jambha Khan can attack from any point without being seen beforehand. Given his ability to climb trees, even an assault from above is likely.

Before he gets into close combat however, Jamba Khan will generally watch from a distance and pick off stragglers.

If the heroes stay together like smart adventurers, he'll do the next best thing: launch a surprise attack, grab a victim in his jaws, and take off. The initial attack *only* grabs the victim. Because of this, ignore the defense rating of any hero seized; the tiger can grab and haul off without bothering to penetrate armor.

When the tiger has moved a safe distance from the rest of the party, he proceeds to tear up his lone victim in a one-on-one contest. Since the hero will be lying on the ground (and in pain) rather than standing, the tiger has the initial advantage.

The first time the tiger attacks the party at night, make Shudra Dasya the victim. The experience will demonstrate just what the tiger is capable of, and give the players a little warning about its tactics, strength, and ferocity.

When Jamba Khan grabs a hero, other heores may wish to pull thier comrade from his mouth. This is a *Daunting (16) Strength (Strength)* action, and is more likely to succeed if several party members work together. Anyone who loses a tug of war with Jambha Khan will see a comrade dragged off into the jungle. Giving chase is highly recommended if they want to see that hero alive again.

Once the heroes are alerted to watch for ambushes from the undergrowth, Jambha Khan will modify his tactics by pouncing on them from the trees above. After a snatch-and-grab attack on a hero, he promptly leaps back into the trees, bearing his victim with him. The tiger will drape his prey over one of the lower branches and tearing him or her apart unless the remaining heroes interfere.

Keep the fear and tension high in the heroes' alien surrounding. You don't want the players to get frustrated, but tracking down a powerful opponent who refuses to stand and fight can be a drawn out process. A plan to hold the tiger still would be ideal, be it with magic, or pit traps near enough to the camp to cover their scent sufficiently. Of ocurse, digging a pit next to camp can have its own drawbacks, if heroes are clumsy or thoughtless during the night....

Eventually through luck, numbers, or sheer stubbornness, the party will wear down the tiger. They'll need to carry proof that they slayed the beast back to the Maharajah. He will then pay the heroes the agreed upon sum, and reimburse reasonable equipment losses.

The residents of the Maiwand district will be grateful, and though poor, can provide shelterand information in future adventures.

Changing Settings

In Krynn, this adventure could easily take place in the elven forests of Ergoth, using a White Spawn: Co 6, Ph 9, In4, Es 6, Dmg +7, Def-3. A White Spawn's breath attack is a blast of frigid air doing 9 points of damage. It has access to the cryomancy sorcery. More details can be found in the DRAGONLANCE® Bestiary on sale in September. ❑

INSTANT ID
getting into your tournament PC

by Spike Y Jones

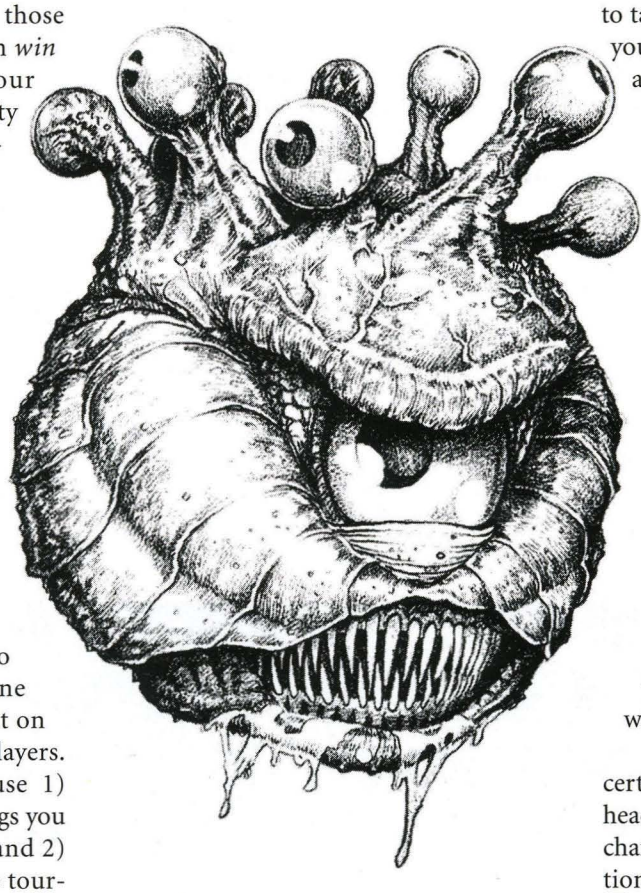
Although playing in a long-running campaign at home or school is the standard method of enjoying roleplaying games, as an RPGA member, you know about roleplaying tournaments. Not only do tournaments provide a gaming fix for those unable to game regularly, you can *win* them, getting recognition for your roleplaying abilities, receiving a nifty memento (often a fancy certificate), and even getting a prize!

But there are significant differences between campaign and tournament adventures. A master roleplayer in one environment may find him or herself lost in the other. And the biggest difference is how you run your character.

In campaign games you can run with the plot for a while, confident that there will be sufficient time for characterization to gradually occur. In a tournament game, however, you've only got about four hours to accomplish the mission and define your PC well enough to impress it on the minds of the GM and other players. You want to be memorable because 1) memories are usually the only things you bring away from a tournament, and 2) you want a chance of winning the tournament if roleplaying is the prize-awarding criterion.

Usually, roleplaying performance is judged more heavily than story completion. Getting into character quickly can be more important than arriving at a plot solution at all! So remember, character is primary to further those twin goals of enjoyment and winning.

Note that while the strategies here are primarily for classic tournaments, many of the same techniques are applicable for campaign tournaments too. Remember that you want to be memorable and leave a favorable impression.



In Advance

The first key to getting into character quickly is to be prepared. Have appropriate materials (pencils, highlighters, dice, rules) with you so you don't have to waste time begging and borrowing on arrival. Show up early if possible, or at least on time. If you arrive late, you cut into your play time, as well as that of five others and the GM. In the end, this makes it more difficult for you to convince these people to award the prize to you, and you'll have less time for the fun.

Character Selection

At the start of the game, the GM will offer a number of PCs to you. Don't waste too much time fretting over which to take; if there's no intrinsic reason why you *can't* play a specific character (such as a lack of rules knowledge pertaining to that character class) just pick one.

If the adventure and PCs are well designed, then each player should have an equal chance of winning the tournament with any of the characters provided. If this isn't the case, talk to the GM afterward. The GM can tell you about ways you could have won, or you may force him or her to reconsider future runs of the same adventure. Assuming that the event will be judged on roleplaying skill, not on how many orcs are killed, then any character can be a winner if played well. You just need to recognize the potential on the character sheet, and then do something with it.

When the GM describes the PCs, certain things may spark an idea in your head concerning how you could play that character. For instance, if he or she mentions a European character, and you can do a French accent or a passable Irish brogue, set your sights on that PC even if it doesn't appear to be the most "winnable" one. The key is to give a memorable (and favorable) performance, so adding "bits" like an accent or distinctive mannerisms will usually score points with the GM and other players. On the other hand, if your Scottish accent tends to slide into your Pakistani one, maybe you'd better avoid the Scotsman.

The spark doesn't have to be a fully-realized vision of you playing the PC; that's more useful when creating a character at home. Here, all you have to do is find a way to put a bit of yourself into it.

Tagging

Once you have your character sheet, give it a quick read-through to familiarize yourself with it. After that use a highlighter to mark "tags"—skills, mental quirks, or other details that can be used to better roleplay the character. The most obvious tags are abilities which the character uses so consistently that they became his trademarks, such as Flight for a superhero named "The Eagle." The GM expects you to use these abilities. If the pyromancer Taircon Firesoul doesn't cast a single fireball during the adventure, people will wonder how he earned his name and profession. If the characters are well-crafted, all the special abilities the party needs are included among the PCs, usually prominently displayed.

Trademark abilities are important to succeeding at the scenario mission, but personality tags may be more important when it comes to winning a roleplaying tournament.

In one tournament where we played monsters protecting our dungeon homes, I was voted the best roleplayer for my portrayal of a beholder. I wasn't the most effective fighter, but I paid close attention to the part of the personality description that said that my beholder was more interested in protecting its treasure than anything else. Therefore, my beholder stood out from the crowd when it wouldn't pursue adventurers after they'd been driven from its lair. (The runners-up in the event were players running a red dragon and a handful of kobolds! That just goes to show that combat-effective PCs aren't always the winners.)

Background

More and more, classic tournaments feature multi-page characters, with the first page covering the usual character statistics, and additional pages providing world history, character and adventure background, in-depth character descriptions, and the like. Most players automatically start their reading with the standard character sheet, so if you want to stand out as the player who actually took the time to learn the background information, read the extra pages first. Game stats are easy to grasp quickly, so come back to those after you have a sense of the character's larger context.

During the course of the game, it's easy to look up your character's Dexterity or hit points if needed. It's right on top, organized on the paper. It's more time-consuming to look up the relationship between two NPCs mentioned in the background. By piping up with such information during a session you'll be more memorable than if you can merely remember your to-hit bonuses.

Failures Count

Don't let skill proficiency dictate what your PC does. Make good use of abilities that are likely to benefit your character and the party, but also use your other, lesser abilities, even those with an almost guaranteed failure chance. As long as you let everyone know that you're attempting your Cow-Punching skill, and present it with a good build-up, you'll be more memorable for your failure than the wizard's 37th lightning bolt, no matter how effective it was.

You usually don't want to portray your PC as a bungling fool (unless that's the character), but sticking with only your surefire abilities will turn him into a caricature. He'll become "the fireball guy" instead of "Taircon the Mage."

Consistency Or Originality?

In a tournament with pre-written PCs, you've got to follow the dictates of the character sheet if you want to win the game and still maximize your fun. The GM has a pretty good idea of what your character can do and how he or she is supposed to act. If your PC makes an obvious mistake because you ignored a blatant statement on the sheet, the GM is justified in holding it against you when scoring time comes.

And there may be hidden depths to the PCs that only become evident when everyone plays his or her part properly. If one PC is a chain-smoker and another is a belligerent non-smokers' rights advocate, the expected synergy between these characters only occurs if both players play these traits up. If either fails to play the part properly, it reduces the entertainment value of the adventure and the chances of either player winning. On the other hand, if you at least try to play your part properly, when the end comes and everyone reveals the secret details of their PCs, you can demonstrate how faithfully you portrayed your character.

Still, for four hours that character is yours, so have fun with it. Experiment, do things that aren't listed as favorite tactics of the PC, come up with new catch-phrases and behavior patterns, and work at differentiating *your* version of that PC from anyone else's.

Take note of the names of NPCs you meet and any important plot details. The GM will appreciate it if a player refers to "Claudius Sextus" instead of "that centurion we were talking to before."

If the GM has run this adventure before then you're not just competing with the other players around the table, you're competing with the GM's memory of all the other versions of that PC. If you want a place in her pantheon of memories, you have to do something memorable instead of just apeing the holders of that character sheet in previous rounds. You have to stick out and surpass those other performances.

A player should at least pay attention during parts of the story that don't involve his or her character. Information that seems irrelevant now may become significant later.

When trying to decide between being conservative and original, err on the side of originality. Sure, the other players get a chance at the end of the adventure to learn how your PC was "supposed" to behave, but that only comes after they've spent four hours in your company getting first, second, and lasting impressions. Better to impress them with a great performance that they know about, instead of a superbly restrained showing that only impresses after the fact.

Paperwork

Always take note of the character names of the other PCs. Then remember to always refer to those names, not "*her* character" or "the fighter... no, the other fighter."

Also, take note of the names of NPCs you meet and any important plot details. The GM will appreciate it if a player refers to "Claudius Sextus" instead of "that centurion we were talking to before."

This makes it easier for you to play in character, and gives you a role to play among the player, that of "note-taker." If you play this role well, the others will stop taking notes themselves, or never even start—after all, you've got it covered. Then, when it's important to remember a clue given early on, you'll be the only player with notes to refer to, scoring points with everyone.

Intensity

Concentration counts. A GM can be turned off by a player who's a great roleplayer when it's his turn, but reads a book or doodles when it isn't. That player can even earn the other players' wrath if he or she is disruptive during down time.

A player should at least pay attention during parts of the story that don't involve his character. Information that seems irrelevant now may become significant later. More importantly, the storyline and the performances of the other players could be entertaining. An entertaining game is worth the cost no matter who wins.

A winning strategy is total involvement with the character to the point that he doesn't have down time. Whenever a character isn't center stage he or she still must be doing something. If the PC is supposed to be in her study writing a letter to the local magistrate, instead of just waiting a few minutes and announcing that "the letter is done" or saying, "I write it," the player could spend the down time actually writing the letter.

Another technique is for PCs to have off-camera, but in-character, conversations with each other. Whether these discussions are on-topic (making plans for a coming fight) or off-topic(discussing last night's date or tomorrow's charity ball), they contribute to the plot, to the game's entertainment value, and to your win.

Keep in mind though, that off-stage discussions aren't the main event in the tournament and must be kept discreet. Keep conversations quiet enough to be ignored by players intent on the central storyline, and be sure that other players are okay with you doing your own thing. And when the GM says ,"Okay, back to the main event," heed the warning.

Tiptoe Or Tread-On-Toe?

With all this advice about playing a character to the hilt, you may think going full-tilt at all times and making center stage your personal possession is the best way to win. In fact, it's the worst way. Other players resent being upstaged; even if you manage to do all the right things during your performance, they'll consider boorish play arrogant, not excellent.

The winner in a roleplaying tournament is more like the Most Valuable

Player than the guy with the most stolen bases. Gaming is a mutual entertainment and the person who contributes the most to the enjoyment of the group is the person most deserving of an award.

In fact, helping another PC succeed in the goal of the adventure may do more to help you win the tournament than accomplishing the mission on your own. If your PC nobly allows another to grab the glory or tragically dies just inches from the goal, you can make his performance more memorable than the hack player who waltzes in afterward and picks up the MacGuffin without ceremony. If you lay the groundwork for someone else's success, a fair group may see your contribution as greater than that of a player who merely rode your coat-tails to the climax.

Nobody Likes A Sore Loser. Or A Sore Winner.

This isn't just something your mother used to tell you, it's also a way to improve your chances of winning tournaments.

If an entire event is bad or spoiled by an obnoxious player, don't put on a smile and lie about it. But if the event was fun overall and the only disappointment was that your character didn't clobber the villain, admit that you enjoyed most of it. If the GM has to choose a winner from among five griping whiners and one smiling face, you have the inside track. And while it's important to show enthusiasm, you'll score marks against yourself if you gloat or disparage others.

Letting the GM know that you enjoyed the session is not the same as buttering up. Be honest. If you didn't like the scenario, be detailed in the tournament critique section of your score sheet so that it can be changed for future use. If winning the tournament is so important to you that you would lie to the GM about the quality of the adventure (even if the GM wrote it), you're doing a disservice to yourself and a lot of other players. Not only did you have to sit through four hours of something you didn't like in order to win some small prize, but you're forcing future players to sit through the same flawed adventure.

Win Or Lose

No matter how good a role-actor you are, you won't win every tournament you enter. Occasionally you'll see someone win who was obviously (to your mind) inferior in his roleplaying ability. Don't let this get you down.

If winning the prize is the primary consideration, placing the joy of playing a game with a group of friends (old or just-met) secondary, then you may want to ask yourself why you're there at all. Sure, winning is fun, and the race for a prize can spur on excellence in your roleplaying. But roleplaying games are made more for fun than for winning. Remember the other players around you, and encourage them to have fun too. Even without a prize, a table where all players enjoyed themselves is a table with six winners.

While it's important to show enthusiasm, you'll score marks against yourself if you gloat or disparage others.

Internet 101

by Ed Gibson

You can't turn on the television today without seeing something about the Internet or the World Wide Web (WWW). News stories, "hacker" characters, even companies put their Uniform Resource Locator (URL) into advertisements (<http://www.tsr.com> for example) on TV. There are technical differences, but for our purposes, the Internet and WWW are interchangeable.

A wide variety of resources are available on the Internet for anyone who has the inclination to look. You may have been on the Internet, checked out the TSR and other game company websites, and even downloaded adventures written by private individuals. If that's all though, you've only scratched the surface.

If you are run a semi-historical game such as Call of Cthulhu, the ALTERNITY® game, the TOP SECRET® game, Chill, or one of the many superhero games out there, a lot of factual information is useful directly in your campaign. From armored cars to luxury motor homes to theofficial U.S. State Department travel advisories, there is a lot of information available. But how do you find it?

access the info

We'll assumes that you know how to run a web browser from AOL or some other Internet Service Provider (ISP). If you don't have a computer, contact your local public library; many offer free internet access. Many schools also provide accounts for their students, so nearly anyone can gain access.

The key to finding information on the WWW is the search engine (unless you already knowthe URL). There are five major search engines:

Yahoo
<http://www.yahoo.com>
Webcrawler
<http://www. webcrawler.com>
Lycos
<http://www.lycos.com>
AltaVista
<http://www.altavista.digital.com>
Excite
<http://www.excite.com>

The major search engines all display virtually the same sites, so choose one you like, learn the search syntax, and stick to it.

A search engine looks for matches on the word or words you enter in all of the web pages it has cataloged. If you'd like additional background information, reviews, search hints, and even more search engines are available at <http://www.searchenginewatch.com>.

If you want to see what other routines are available, search for "search engine" in your preferred search engine. (Hint— entering the words to search for in quotes tells the search engine that both words must be present and in that order. Without quotes, the search engine will accept either word regardless of order.) Many search engines are available, but they may be poorly supported and not have the same breadth of information as those listed here.

search tips

When selecting words for your search, try to be as specific as possible. If you want information on superheroes, "superhero" (6921 matches) generates far more matches and less useful information than "marvel universe" (1440 matches). I recommend that you set your search engine to display more information than just the URL, to narrow your search more rapidly. If you find a web page which has the sort of information you want, check out that page's links page too (if there is one). There's a good chance the links will lead you to more information. The page may even be part of a web ring, a collection of inter-linked pages on a given subject. Then you can move directly to the other pages in the ring for more information.

Search engines also offer ways to refine your search; use these when your search lists sites which don't interest you (comic book stores, for example).

immediate gratification

This month's issue deals with superheroes, so the sidebar below has sites useful for any modern campaign, especially one for superheroes. A collection of superhero links can be found by going to <http://www.yahoo.com>. Select "entertainment," then select "comics & anime," then "comic books."

That's all for this issue; if you have questions or suggested sites, send them to <polyhedron@wizards.com>. ❑

Notice: *Anyone* may set up a web site. Some sites include nudity, violence, and racist material. We will not intentionally direct you to offensive sites, but we cannot be responsible if links lead to objectionable material. Parents, please consider programs to limit children's access to information you find offensive. Two products, Netnanny, <http://www.netnanny.com> and Cyberpatrol <http://www.cyber patrol.com> are available for reasonable prices.

URLs you can Use

(for your game)

Would a mobile HQ be appropriate for NPCs in the campaign? Check out <http://www.newellcoach.com> for floorplans, illustrations, and specs for a luxury motor coach. Now they can travel in style.

Are the villains planning to attack a motorcade of visiting dignitaries or does a rich hero want to travel safely? Check out <http://www.ogara.com> for descriptions of six levels of vehicle armoring and all sorts of little goodies that can be built into an automobile.

Tired of dictating the mission to the heroes? Now you can generate realistic handoutsthat encourage the heroes to take action. Go to <http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html> and click on the country where you have set up the next mission. Save the document to a file, and then use a word processor to add your own information to the notice. You can send it aheadof time to any players who have email, possibly with a couple of dummy mailings to keep things from being too simple.

The PBeM File

5 Steps to Running Your First PBeM

by Stephane Raymond

As most Game masters know, starting a new adventure is no easy task. If you're running a Play By email game, you add in the need to consider the limitations of the Internet. Suddenly, you find yourself in a difficult spot indeed.

In order to help you start your own PBeM event, take a look at the five steps found below. These five steps can avoid a lot of headaches early on.

1. Look

Don't jump in the PBeM bandwagon just because you have a computer. Test your skills with an existing PBeM first. See how other Game Masters operate and if you are comfortable with the style and pace of play. Many GMs will allow observers (known as "lurkers") into the game. A simple inquiry is all it takes!

2. Know your software

No matter if you run your game via the web, email, or IRC, you must fully understand the software you intend to use. Most new PBeM Game masters are overwhelmed by the quantity of mail they receive. Understanding how to make the best use of your software will avoid getting drowned in the daily postings. The rest, of course, is up to your players....

3. Be ready for months of work

Your first PBeM adventure should be small and something you have tried before. Why? Unless you have a rule stating that gamers must participate daily, you will soon realize that the simplest of games can often take anything from 2 to 6 months to complete. Be ready for it. Make sure your new players realize it as well. There's nothing more frustrating than a Game Master (or gamer) who decides to quit two months into an involved game.

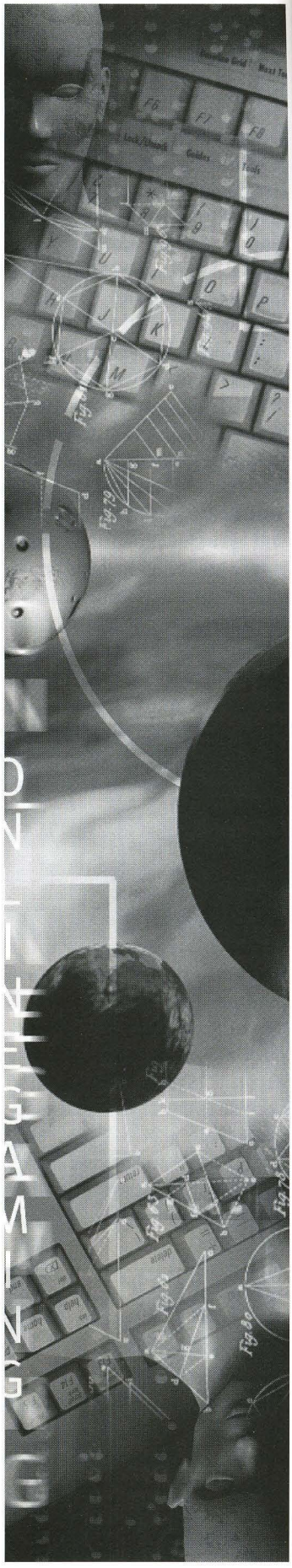
4. Keep the game moving

Since PBeM games take more time to complete, make sure that your characters don't get stuck into endless subplots or useless game elements. Having your characters visit the local tavern to gather information is fine. Just make sure you get them out of there before their beards start turning grey!

5. Start your players on "probation"

Now that you are ready, are your gamers able to answer the challenge? Have your players create introduction messages for their characters before you actually start. This will give you the chance to evaluate their writing skills. Let's be honest. PBeM games are based on content. You want your players to be able to let you see what their characters are doing. You also want them to be able to participate actively into the game. If you have a player unable or unwilling to meet these two requirements, he or she should be replaced. It's that simple.

❑



DM Tips—GOING SOLO

the last resort for RPG players lost in the wilderness.

by Matt Brebner

From March 1995 until December 1997 my family and I lived in Brunei, where I taught English to Malay high school students. I left Tauranga, New Zealand, and a small but dedicated corps of AD&D® game players, with whom I'd played and DMed for ten years.

I packed up my AD&D gear and took it with me to the tiny sultanate of Brunei, an oil-rich Muslim country nestled on the north-west coast of Borneo, South East Asia.

To my horror, I could not find a single person to go into imaginary dungeons with me and fight many-legged monsters knee-deep in slime. I scanned the classifieds in POLYHEDRON to no avail; not a single con or player could be found within 1500 miles, and I wasn't set up for play by mail.

Withdrawal symptoms became acute within months.

In desperation I thumbed through my moldering 1st Ed. DMG and found Appendices A-C. These ten pages opened up a new style of play for me over those three years of isolation. They allow a player to go down a dungeon generated one step ahead of the player, with passages, doors, caverns, stairs, tricks, traps, and a host of monsters. Treasure could be found, but always with monsters.

In fairness, if a pun can be described as the lowest form of wit, then solo play has to be the lowest form of AD&D. Inevitable limitations include:

- the lack of mediation between DM and player makes objectivity questionable. The temptation is always to give the PCs the benefit of the doubt;
- because the solo player makes every roll, play can be extremely slow, particularly during combat. A single encounter can take four or five hours;
- there is no real storyline to your adventure, other than "Let's map and clean out some more dungeon;"
- solo has a high casualty rate, with a high incidence of poison, lethal traps, and truly fearsome monsters. Commonly, I traveled too far into a dungeon before turning around, then battled wandering monsters every step of the way out. The fall of the dice can kill you easily in solo, without a DM to moderate rolls for you behind a screen.

For all these limitations, solo can still offer rewards:

- if you're isolated, you can get your dose of AD&D. It ain't pretty, but you get practice using spells and magic items, and bring home bonus treasure;
- if your characters are entitled to NPC followers, then you can take them adventuring and slowly build them up. They are entitled to a half-share of XP from a mission, and you get the chance to play different NPC classes and races;
- you expand your knowledge of monsters and their abilities greatly, forced to develop tactics for strategic withdrawals when encountering powerful new foes (as opposed to every-man-for-himself flight, which usually costs the life of the slowest NPC);
- your mapping skills inevitably improve once your dungeon acquires multiple levels and you link up random chimneys, stairwells, and elevator rooms. The dungeon takes on its own personality as hazards and favorite routes become established;
- as the dungeon develops, you can create your own goals for each mission. An example for might be: "Explore the south-west corner of level 2 to check for a gnoll stronghold (gnolls were encountered twice as wandering monsters from that direction on the last mission), then descend to L5 to map the huge cavern there." I looked for threads that linked together within the dungeon, and was surprised at how often coherent "stories" emerged from random encounters. The undead I fought must have had a source; therefore the next large area with pillars and an altar I found was likely to be the temple that created them. This meant that the next high level wizard, priest, or vampire encountered was probably the creator, complete with bodyguards and minions.

OK, so it required a lot of imagination. But isn't that the point of RPGs?

I also learned a number of sideline lessons from solo play:

1) The most dangerous foe is a high-level group of evil NPCs. They're probably there for the same reason you are, only they won't hesitate to wipe out a rival party to get treasure.

2) "Surprise" rolls are crucial. An armored, light-bearing group will seldom surprise, but the monsters often will. The worst situations resulted in being jumped at point-blank range.

3) Self-imposed limits are required to keep it fair. You can cut and run almost any time, so the odds are in your favor. A real DM wouldn't let you off the hook, so I imposed the following penalties:

- only two thirds of XPs gained from solo play count;
- no artifacts, intelligent swords, or other ultra-powerful magic items can be found, unless you defeated an ultra-powerful opponent, such as pit fiends or ancient dragons;
- for any significant magic item acquired through solo, another item must be used up or sold off (potions, protection scrolls, and magical arrows expended should be replaced from treasure without penalty). This allows you to swap items for others more useful without a character becoming a walking arsenal.
- full encumbrance applies. Your PCs may have to leave the copper, silver, and electrum behind and come back for it later. Unattended treasure has a 25% cumulative chance per day of disappearing. (It got added to another scavenger's horde, naturally).
- lastly, don't play solo in preference to group play. The spirit of the game is gregarious; if you try to boost characters solo, friends will see it as a form of cheating.

Happy solo, you lonely AD&D players out there. ❑

Conventions

Featuring Network Sanctioned Tournaments

COMIC-CON
When: Aug 13-16 **Where:** San Diego Convention Center, CA
What: RPGA Classic, LC, VS, Marvel Super Heroes, Dragon Dice; Comics, Books, Mags, Trading Cards, Toys, Model Kits, Film & TV Mem., more!
Cost: Contact for details
Contact: <SirRizzen@aol.com> or <http://www.Comic-Con.Org>

COGCON
When: Sep 25-27 **Where:** Rolla, MO
What: RPGA AD&D, CoC, Earthdawn, LIVING CITY, LIVING DEATH, In Nomine, GURPS, Warhammer, Champions, minis, Star Fleet Battles, M:tG, Star Wars TCG.
Cost: $10 pre-reg, $13 at door. special rates for single day and TCG-only.
Contact: 573/368-4263, website: <www.rollanet.org/~cogcon>

ARCHON 22
When: Oct 2-4 **Where:** Collinsville, IL–Gateway Conv. Center and Holiday Inn
What: writer workshops, panels, videos, art show. RPGA games, minis, board games, TCGs. Guests: James P. Hogan, Lester Smith, Ricky & Karen Dick.
Cost: adults $25 'til Aug 31, $30 after.
Contact: P.O. B. 8387, St. Louis, MO 63132. <www.stlf.org/archon/index.html>

THE CON WITH NO NAME
When: Oct. 16-18 **Where:** West Lafayette, IN
What: RPGA events, AD&D, GURPS, WoD, ALTERNITY, Star Wars, Deadlands, minis, TCGs, board games, demos, Vampire LARP, Gothic Dance Party, more!
Cost: pre-reg $15 til Aug 15, $20 at door
Contact: The Con Men, PO Box 1602, Portage, IN 46368 <conman1@gte.net>

CONLITE 15
When: Aug 23 **Where:** on the Web
What: LIVING CITY Procampur events and AD&D.
Cost: Free
Contact: Jay Fisher, 2690 Drew Street APT 1108, Clearwater, FL 33759. Email: <jlorien@concentric.net> Web: <http://www.concentric.net/~jlorien/conline/index.html>

GEN CON
When: Aug 6-9 **Where:** Milwaukee, WI
What: RPGA games a go-go! Living City events like there's no tomorrow! A veritable Gamer Nirvana. Come, or miss more gaming than you can hold in a shopping cart. Even without Steve Jackson.
Cost: 4 day, $50. 1 day, $18 at the door.
Contact: call 1-800/529-EXPO
or web: <www.andonunlimited.com>

SYNDICON '98
When: Nov. 16-18 **Where:** Portage, IN–Days Inn
What: RPGA events, AD&D, GURPS, WoD, ALTERNITY, Star Wars, Shadowrun, Deadlands, minis, TCGs, board games, demos, Vampire LARP, more!
Cost: pre-reg $15 til Aug 15, $20 at door
Contact: The Con Men, PO Box 1602, Portage, IN 46368 <conman1@gte.net>

DRAGONFLIGHT '98
When: Aug. 28-30 **Where:** Seattle, WA–Seattle University
What: RPGs, minis, board , card, & computer games. Dragonflight '98 is the largest gaming venue in the Pacific NW.
Cost:
Contact:<info@dragonflight.org> or write Dragonflight '98, P.O. Box 417, Seattle, WA 98111-0417

FROSTBITE '99
When: Mar. 13, 1999 **Where:** Port Huron, MI–Baker College
What: RPGA LIVING CITY events, guests, demos, sci-fi previews and panels, Rifts, and a bunch more!
Cost: $5 pre-reg, $7 at door
Contact: Michael Douglas <glithndr@whitestar.org> web: <www.whitestar.org/frostbite/>

WINCON
When: Sept. 4-6 **Where:** Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada
What: AD&D, Star Wars, M: tG, Highlander TCG Nationals, WH40K, more! auction for Winnipeg Public Library.
Cost: $15 in advance $20 at the door
Contact: PO Box 28073, 1453 Henderson Hwy, Winnipeg, MB, R2G 4E9 e-mail <greywolf@pangea.ca>

ANDCON '98
When: Oct 2-4 **Where:** Toledo, OH.
What: 8 LIVING CITY events including 4 New LC: LD, LJ, AD&D and Deadlands with a High Level Campaign feature event and the Andonian Games LC Interactive.
Cost: Contact for details
Contact: Call 1-800-529-EXPO or register online at <www.andonunlimited.com>.

BRIDGECON 1998
When: Oct 10 **Where:** Bridgewater, MA–Portugese Holy Ghost Society Hall
What: AD&D, LIVING CITY events, White Wolf games, Star Wars, M:tG, more!
Cost: $15
Contact: <scholars@ici.net> or call 508/279-1712

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RENTON, WA 98057

SHORECON '98
When: Sept. 17-20 **Where:** Cherry Hill, NJ–Hilton Hotel, Route 70 East.
What: Weekend track includes First Run LC and LD events, LD Interactive. Artists, auction, demos, computer games, more!
Cost: $30 pre-reg, $40 at door. Events Free! Day rates vary.
Contact: Multigenre, Inc. 732/657-3311, web: <http://www.multigenre.com>.

WEEKEND IN GOTHIC EARTH
When: Oct. 30-Nov. 1 **Where:** Ohio, Georgia, Illinois, Colorado, & Toronto, Canada
What: A multi-site LIVING DEATH Con featuring **five** tournaments, with three first-run events,all mid or mid/high level. Other LD events will vary by location.
Cost: contact for details
Contact: Dan Donnelly (GA) <RDRavens@aol.com>; Scott Thorne (IL) <CastleP@aol.com>; Ken Richart (CO) <KenCowrite@aol.com>; Ivan Mulkeen (Canada) <etrigan@idirect.com>; Keith Hoffman (OH) <KWH53@aol.com>
Convention Coordinator: Claire Hoffman: 5119 S. Tecumseh Rd, Springfield, OH, 45502-9758 USA , 937/322-1379

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KENTUCKY: My name is Steven Moore, I am an African-American student interested in starting a Network club in the Richmond area. I have been a DM for four years, and have experience with the FORGOTTEN REALMS® and RAVENLOFT® settings, Rifts, and Robotech. If interested, please email: <STUSTMOO@acs.eku.edu>.

WANTED: FOR4 The Code of the Harpers; DSS2 Air Earth Fire Water; Van Richten's Guide to Vampires; Ltd. Ed. ALTERNITY® Player's Handbook. Will pay handsomely, or trade (e.g. digest-sized D&D set). Contact: John Suter, 8 Spring Hill Court, Randolph, NJ 07869.

LOOKING FOR players and RPGA® members in New Mexico (esp. Santa Fe area) who would like to form a a Network club. I run AD&D campaigns exclusively, but we can discuss other games you may want to play/run. If interested, please call: 505/992-2778 or write J.T. Fuqua II, 215 Tesuque Dr., Santa Fe, NM, 87505-3837.

among others. Email <mjg@io.com> for info or to be added to the list.

JOIN THE UCC: The Universe Construction Company is an online RPGA Network Club. In addition to sponsoring major conventions/game-days online each month, the UCC has been charged to develop the FORGOTTEN REALMS city of Procampur for TSR, Inc. and the Network's LIVING CITY Campaign. For more information, contact Jay Fisher at <jlorien@concentric.net>.

SELLING: BIRTHRIGHT® player's secrets of Binsada, Endier, Medoere, Tuornen, Tolinie, and Ilien. Also selling *Cities of the Sun* campaign expansion, and three adventures: Warlock of the Stonecrowns, The Sword of Roele, and Sword and Crown. All but campaign expansion still in plastic. Write for prices or make an offer: Wayne Hansen, 1233 W. 3rd St., Red Wing, MN 55066.

23-YEAR-OLD VA prisoner seeking correspondence with worldwide gamers for exchange of ideas. I'm

only a genuine Thieves' Guild can provide? Then send your ideas, suggestions and heartfelt hurrahs to me at: petergamer@prodigy.net or Peter Parker, 4211 E. Broad apt.210, Columbus, OH 43213

I AM DAVE. AND I AM LOOKING FOR CURRENT TSR, *AD&D*, AND *RAVENLOFT* PLAYERS IN THE DAVIS/WEBER COUNTY AREAS IN UTAH. YOU CAN REACH ME AT 1190 W. 1700 S. SYRACUSE, UT. 84075.

FOR SALE: RAVENLOFT Products. Bleak House: Death of Rudloph van Richten ($15.00), House of Strahd, From the Shadows, Roots of Evil and Thoughts of Darkness (All for $10.00). All in mint condition. No trades please. Contact Jeffrey Williams at P.O. Box 16003 Las Vegas, NV, 89101; call 702/650-5268, (leave a message); or email <devilboy@anv.net>.

WANTED: I am looking for a complete and well-cared-for copy of the Time of the Dragons. It is the expansion set detailing the Continent of

WANTED: Two mature AD&D players, 18 yrs +, male or female, to join ongoing group of players in the Downriver area of Detroit. If interested, call Richard Hall at 734/285-6025 4 PM to 9 PM M-F, or write: 13698 Walnut St., Southgate, MI 48195-1813.

REWARD! looking for DUNGEON® Magazine #s1,2,3,5, 6. Also, module U1, *Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*. Will pay handsomely for copies of each in good or better condition. Can trade from extensive list: AD&D, GURPS, TOP SECRET® game, old and newer stuff. Write Doug Ironside at 253 Centennil Dr., Midland, ON, Canada L4R5H9. Please enclose phone number.

FOR SALE: Magic, Illuminati, Netrunner, and Star Trek TCG cards. Many rares. Very reasonable. Write Doug Ironside at 253 Centennil Dr., Midland, ON, Canada L4R5H9. Enclose phone number.

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ATTENTION. Come join the only RPGA Club in Florida with regular meetings. We generally meet each second Friday of the month at 7 p.m. We discuss necessary business, then play RPGA sanctioned tournaments. The games are held on the Univerity of Central Florida campus, Education Building, Room 340. PO 677069, Orlando, FL 32867-7069. 407/679-9666 Email: <darkmage76@aol.com> Web: <http://www.orbiter.com/rpgaclub>

KENTUCKY: looking for people in Owensboro and surrounding counties to help set up a Game Day. Open to suggestions. Want variety of games. Write: Willaim Hilliard, 1959 Fox Hollow Rd., Island, KY, 42350. Call: 502/486-3275.

LONG ISLAND Area Gamers <http://www.io.com/mjg/liag> is an informal network of gamers in the Long Island and surrounding area. We meet once a month at a local coffeehouse and run an email mailing list for members to organize games on their own. Members play RPGs, card games (collectible or otherwise), wargames/miniatures,

also interested in receiveing membership in any worldwide PBM gaming clubs willing to accept me. Contact: <James@love-penn.com>. If you habe any old gaming magazines, adventures, books, etc. that you no longer want, send them to me, and I'll pay for postage: James G. Harvey #222760, 901 Corrections Way #5-439, Jarratt, VA 23870.

LOOKING FOR PLAYERS for FORGOTTEN REALMS AD&D® game campaign in the Windsor Ontario area. Email: <pilon3@uwindsor.ca> or call 519/077-0730 if interested.

LOOKING to trade a POLYHEDRON® Magazine #8 (fair to good condition) for an LC1. I have 2 copies left. If interested, please write: Robert Burns PSC 50 Box 651 APO, AE 09494-9998 or email: <mytore@gamergod.force9.co.uk>

ARE YOU A lonely Rogue? Do you long to talk shop with other quick-fingered filchers? Are you tired of trying to qualify for some mythical spy organization? Are you dying for the benefits and camaradarie that

Taladas. If you have a copy, contact Jeffrey Williams at 702/650-5268 or e-mail me at <devilboy@anv.net> to discuss price.

ATTENTION: Looking for RPGA Network players inside or near Maine's Augusta-Gardiner area that I can learn how to and play AD&D with. Players must be mature. Contact: Sarah D. Webber, RFD 1# Box 1344, Hallowell, ME 04340.

WANTED: SPELLFIRE Dungeons chase cards 21 & 22. Many chase and rares for trade. Also need BLOOD WARS Lady of Pain. Contact Howard Dawson, 938 Hampton Rd. GP Woods, MI 48236 or call 810/772-2020 during the day.

PLAYERS WANTED FOR a FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign being run in Vienna, VA. Newbies to long-time players welcome. The campaign will run twice a month, more or less, depending on players and DM. If interested, please call 703/560-3393 or email me at <threshold101@msn.com>

Your postage will be refunded with your first order. Send a business-size SASE with $0.75 postage to: James C. Alpeter, PO Box 143, Syracuse, NY, 13206-0143.

WANTED: From the Ashes boxed set, original cover PHBR books, Scourge of the Slavelords (A1-4) and Queen of Spiders (GDQ1-7). Many items for trade. Also looking for Allan Grant and Ellie Sadler action figures from Jurassic Park. Let's deal, let's trade! (Games should be clean, and figures should be MIP) Write Jim Alpeter, PO Box 143, Syracuse, NY, 13206-0143. Thank you in advance for writing.

PA GAMERS: Want to learn new games? Need a GM or players? Check out the Lehigh Valley Gamers Network, a new club in the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton area, into roleplaying, collectible card, board, war, and every other type of game we can get. Monthly meetings with game sessions and Battletech league play on other days. Call Kenneth Newquist at 610/923-7928, email: <nuketown@fast.net>, website: <www.nuketown.com/lvgn/>

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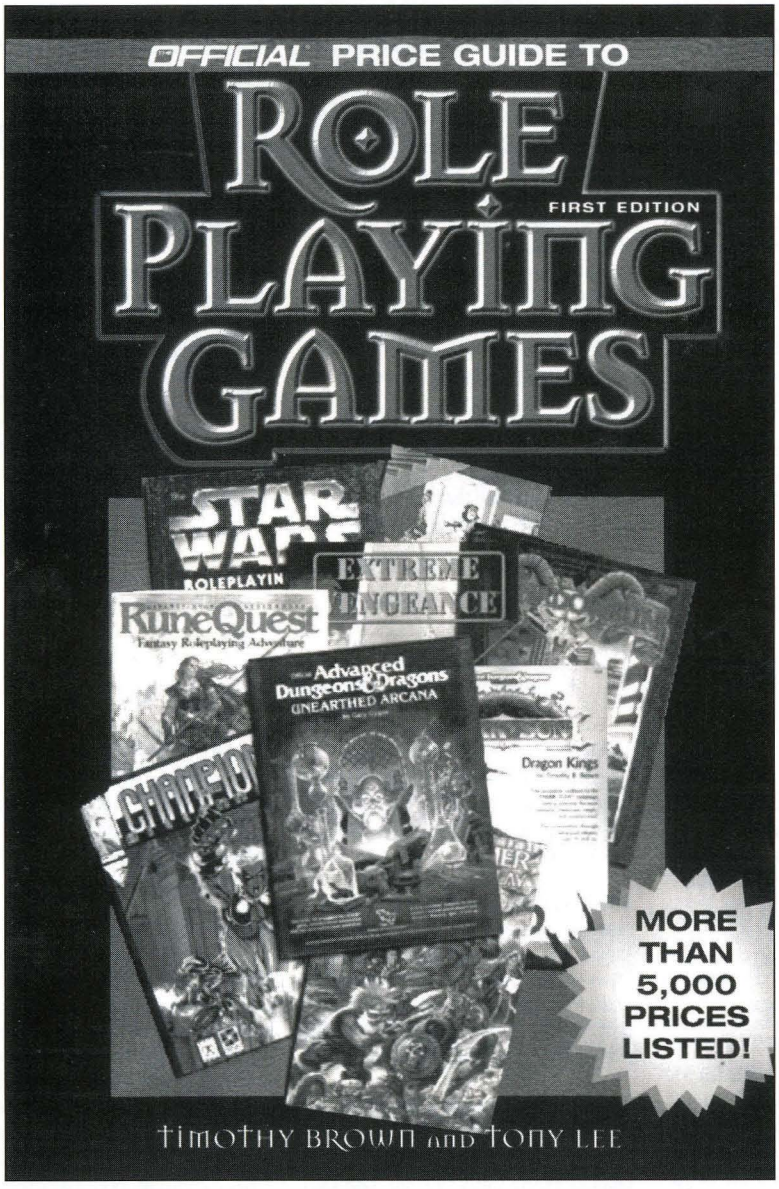

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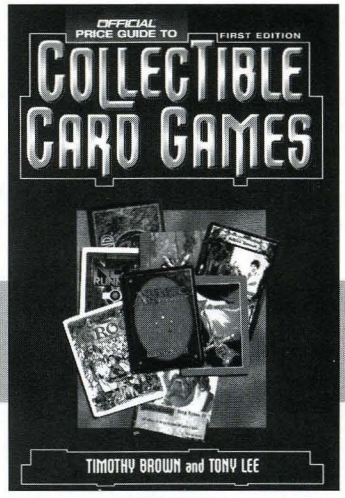

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